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English 20


Module 3

No One Is an Island



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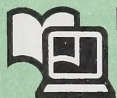
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English 20

Module 3

NO ONE IS AN ISLAND



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English 20
Student Module
Module 3
No One Is an Island
Alberta Distance Learning Centre
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Welcome to Module 3!

We hope you'll enjoy your study of
No One Is an Island.

We've included a prerecorded
audiocassette with this module. The
cassette will help you work through
the material and it will enhance your
listening skills.

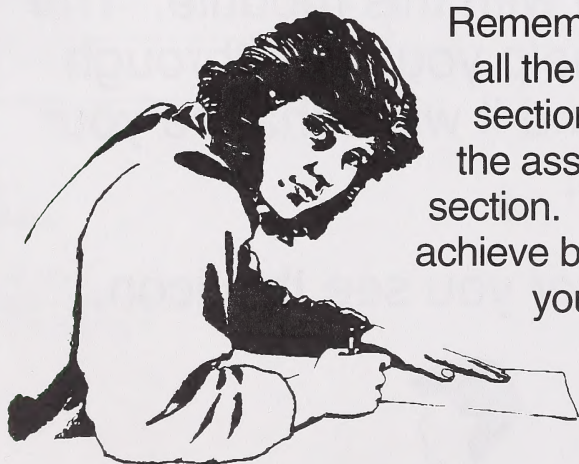
So whenever you see this icon,



turn on your tape and listen.

Since there are no response lines provided in the Student Module Booklets of this course, you'll need a notebook or lined paper to respond to questions, complete charts, and answer questionnaires. It's important to keep your lined paper handy as you work through the material and to keep your responses together in a notebook or binder for review purposes later. Read all the questions carefully, and respond to them as completely as possible. Then compare your responses with the ones supplied in the Appendix.

Some of your personal responses you'll be asked to keep in a separate folder – your Writing Folder. This is explained in Module 1.



Remember to work through all the activities in each section before attempting the assignment for that section. This will help you achieve better success in your studies.

Good luck.

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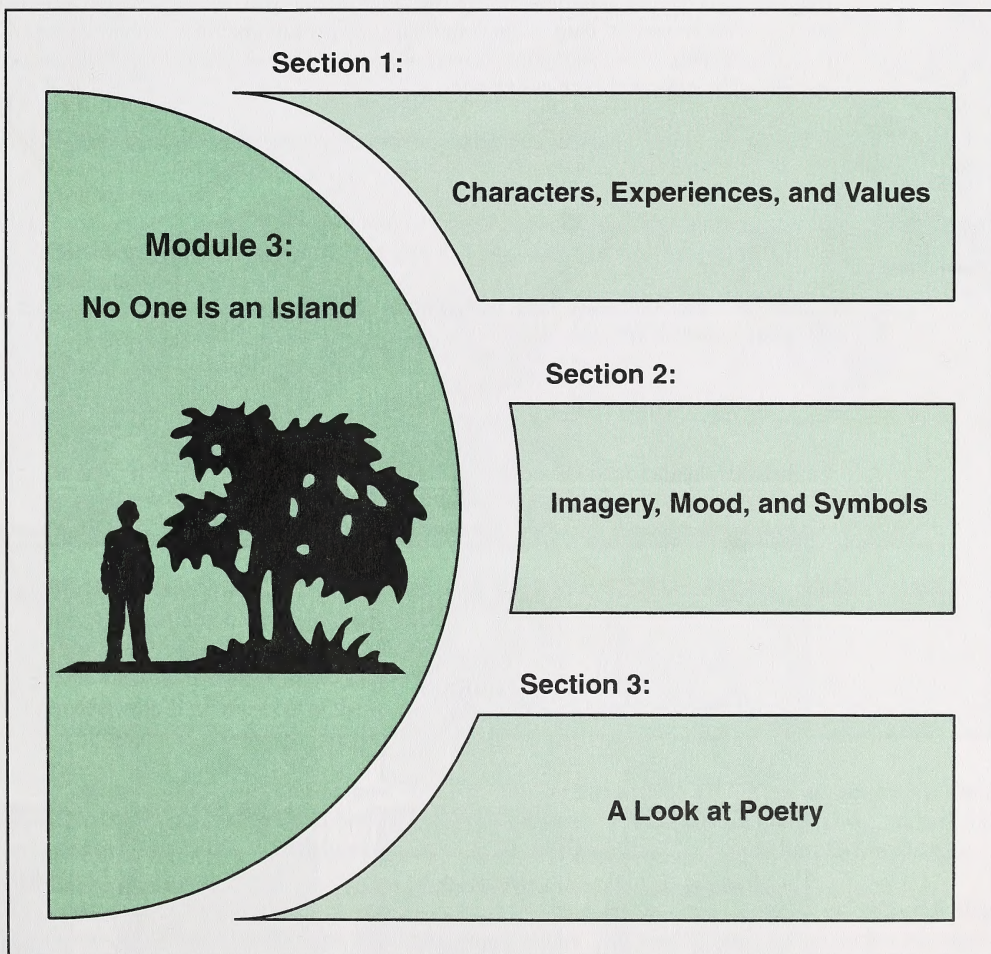
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MODULE OVERVIEW



How often, when reading literature, have you encountered situations involving human relationships that you can relate directly to something you've experienced in your own life? Our relationships with others are probably the most interesting aspect of being human, and it's these relationships that writers, singers, and poets devote most of their time to exploring.

In this module you'll read several short stories and poems that deal with human relationships, and you'll see how literature can capture the complexity and subtlety of human experience through the use of various literary elements. This module will also give you some pathways into understanding poetry and will, it's to be hoped, help you come to appreciate poetry as a source of enjoyment and understanding of human experience.



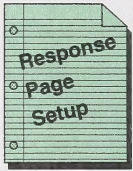
Evaluation

Your mark for this module will be determined by how well you complete the assignments at the end of each section. In this module you must complete three section assignments and one final module assignment. The mark distribution is as follows:

Section 1 Assignment	30 marks
Section 2 Assignment	30 marks
Section 3 Assignment	25 marks
Final Module Assignment	15 marks
TOTAL	100 marks

When doing your assignments, work slowly and carefully. If you're having difficulties, go back and review the appropriate section.

Read all parts of your assignment carefully. Plan and do your rough work on your own paper. Revise and edit your responses; then set up your final copy for submission on your own paper. Lined looseleaf is recommended. Make sure your answers are neat and organized, with wide left margins and space for teacher comments after each assignment.



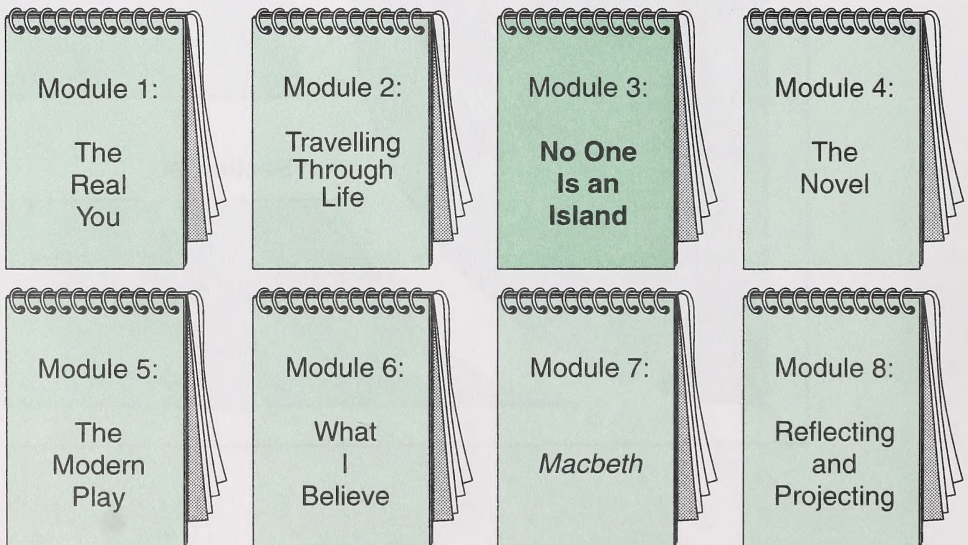
When you see this icon, ideas and details are provided to help you set up and organize your answer in a certain way.

Before submitting your responses, be sure to proofread them carefully to ensure that they say what you want, that they're neat and clear, and that they're complete and missing no material.

You'll be submitting **only** your **assignment response pages** (and in some cases an audiotape or videotape cassette) for evaluation.

COURSE OVERVIEW

English 20 contains eight modules.



SECTION

1

CHARACTERS, EXPERIENCES,
AND VALUES

Have you ever stopped to consider how complex human relationships are? After all, no one lives in a vacuum; our words, actions, and beliefs always affect others who are around us, and we, in turn, are affected by those others. Our behaviour can have far-reaching consequences in time and in distance.

In all the stories that you read in this section, you'll be focusing your attention on understanding characters, exploring relationships, and interpreting values. As you read and reflect on the literature, you should come to understand more fully what the poet John Donne meant when he said "No man is an island." More particularly, you should come to a better understanding of writers' methods of characterization and ways of representing human experience and values – an understanding you'll be able to demonstrate in your Section 1 Assignment.

Activity 1: Human Relationships – Webs of Support or Ropes of Restriction?



WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Here's a rather unusual Writing Folder exercise. It's worth keeping in your folder, however, because you may find you can use it later as the basis of a writing assignment.

Take an unlined sheet of 21.5 cm × 28 cm paper and draw a circle the size of a quarter in the middle of it. Write your name in this circle.

Now draw more circles the same size around your circle. Into these circles place the names of people with whom you come into contact on a regular basis – perhaps daily or weekly.

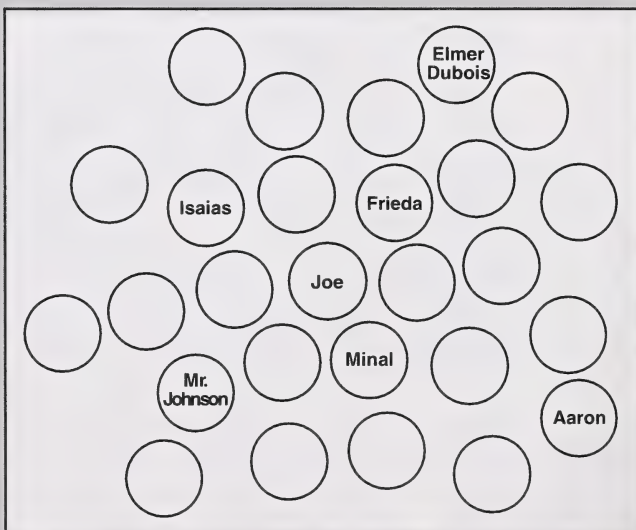


Now draw another ring of circles around the first ring.

Into these circles put the names of people with whom you have contact on a less regular basis – maybe once or twice a month. Perhaps you have enough space for another ring of circles into which you would put the names of people with whom you interact very infrequently – for example, once or twice a year.

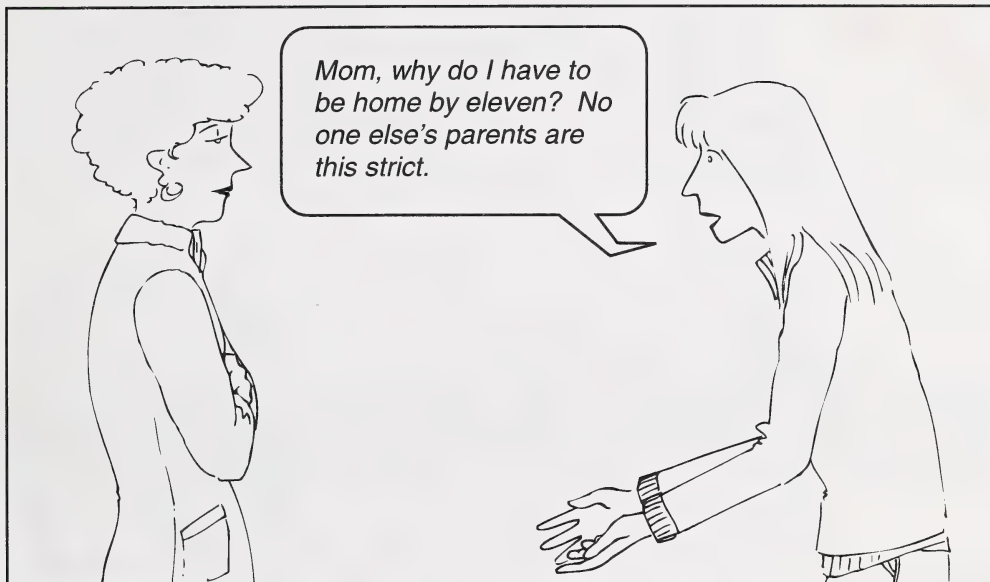
At this point your chart will look something like this one, though you'll probably have many more names filled in.

Now the fun begins. Use a coloured pencil or a felt pen and draw straight lines (you may want to use a ruler) to connect the names of people who know **each other**. For example, your mother may also know Isaías, Frieda, Mr. Johnson, and Elmer Dubois. Now go from person to person and make sure that lines connect all the people who know other people on your chart.



Well, what do you think, now that you're finished? People weave pretty complex webs, don't they?

You've seen, graphically in your chart, how human relationships can be very complicated because of the numbers of people involved. Sometimes, though, relationships are complicated when only two people are involved. Look at the chart that you've just drawn and find one person in it with whom you have a complicated relationship.



Why is your relationship with the person you chose a complex one? Does it involve conflict? What are your differences? Why is it difficult to resolve them?

1. Explain some ways in which two people might have a complex relationship.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 1.

You've thought about – and no doubt experienced – how two people can have a complex relationship that often involves conflict. Much literature looks at how personal and cultural differences can create situations in which characters are in conflict.



Turn to page 264 of *Literary Experiences* and read the short story “The Broken Globe,” by Henry Kreisel. This first reading (you'll be reading it at least twice) should be done quickly, just to allow you to appreciate the narrative. As you read, keep in mind that the narrator is a character in the story, not the author. Read the story for the first time now.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Some readers find the conflict between father and son in this story upsetting. Explain the emotions you felt as you read the story. Why did you feel this way?

2. “The Broken Globe” has two principal settings. Identify each one and comment on the impact on the reader the change in setting has.

Hint: The River Thames, mentioned in the second paragraph of the story, is a clue to the first geographical setting.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 1.

If you want to get the most meaning and the most enjoyment out of reading, you must read closely. You must react and interact with the story. Your second reading of “The Broken Globe” should be much more thoughtful than your first. Think about the words and actions of the father. Think about the words and actions of Nick, his son – and those of the narrator, too.

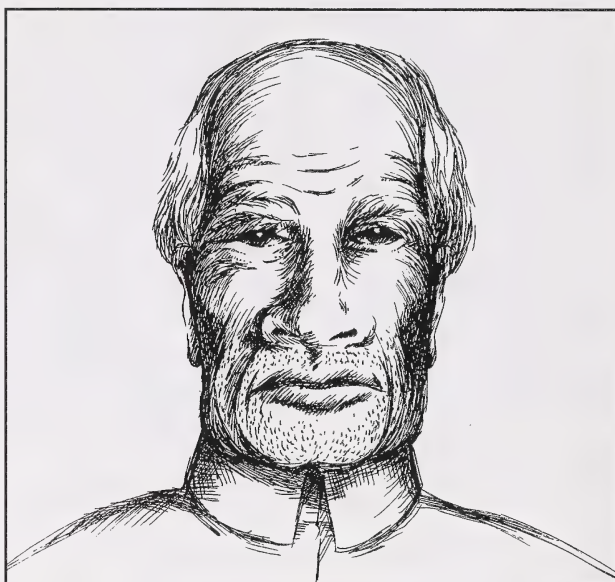
In literature, characterization means much more than merely describing the physical appearance of a character. In “The Broken Globe” some attention is paid to the appearance of old man Solchuk, but, more importantly, there are many details which reveal, either **explicitly** or **implicitly**, the kind of human being that he is. We learn much about the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual qualities of both the father and the son.

Explicitly: stated directly

Implicitly: implied rather than stated directly



Now read “The Broken Globe” for the second time. Think about how the behaviour of the two main characters reveals their beliefs and their feelings.



Now that you’ve read the story twice, what did you find in your second reading that slipped your notice the first time around? Are your feelings about each of the three characters just the same as they were after your first reading? Do you see aspects of their personalities now that you didn’t see before? Do you see connections among the characters now that you hadn’t noticed previously? These are some of the ways in which close reading opens up literature for you; and spending that extra time with a story, poem, or play will help you “get inside” the piece, understand it better, and make connections between that piece and other works of literature or that piece and your own life. Remember, good reading must be active – never passive – reading.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Look at the first two paragraphs of “The Broken Globe.” From the material presented there describe the sort of person Nick appears to be. Use details to support your ideas.

3. Near the beginning of “The Broken Globe” the reader gets a certain impression of Nick’s father from what Nick tells the narrator. Reread the passage on page 266 that begins “ ‘Curious man, my father,’ ” and ends “ ‘Everything else was heresy.’ ”
 - a. From this description – and from any other clues you pick up in the opening pages – describe what you expected Nick’s father to be like.
 - b. Explain how these expectations create tension for the reader.
 - c. Now tell what you learned about Nick himself from his description of his father.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 1.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Describe your impression of Nick’s father when you finally met him. Did he live up to your expectations, or were you surprised? Use details to explain your ideas.

Now listen in on this classroom discussion.



Teacher: When the narrator visits the old man, he’s welcomed into the small farmhouse. Soon the conversation turns to the past as Mr. Solchuk reminisces about Nick’s school days and the start of the conflict between father and son.

Leah: Yeah, and it’s obvious that the conflict was the old man’s fault. He was the one who was pigheaded and who became violent.

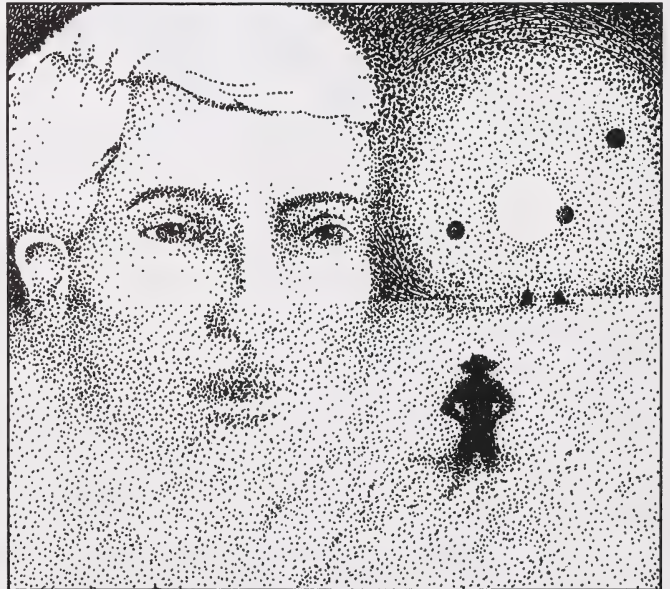
Teacher: Well, I guess you’re right that the old man’s violence leads to the rift between father and son. Both the younger and the older Solchuk hold their beliefs very strongly. Can you spot evidence of Mr. Solchuk’s strong feelings?

- Jake:** That's easy. We're told that the father's voice is "venomous" and that it "thundered" as he tells the narrator of the ideas that his son learned in school.
- Marie:** Yeah, and we also read that as the old man talks, his hands "balled themselves into fists, and the remembered fury sent the blood streaming into his face."
- Teacher:** Good examples. Did you note how the difference between the father's religious beliefs and the son's scientific beliefs leads to violence? The old man beats his son, and Nick in turn hurls the globe at his father's face. And speaking of the globe, do you think it's just an object in the story?
- Anita:** Well, the title of the story sort of tells us that it's a bit more than that, I think.
- Teacher:** Good, so if it has larger significance what might it represent?
- Manfred:** How about the "broken" relationship between father and son?
- Teacher:** Exactly! Their relationship is damaged – just like the globe. Neither the globe nor their relationship works anymore.
- Marie:** So I guess that makes the broken globe a **symbol**, doesn't it?
- Teacher:** It certainly does. The broken globe is very important to this story. It's a symbol that points to the **theme**. It helps you understand what the story is really all about. In this case the story shows how the relationship between a father and son can be seriously damaged because both individuals have strongly held beliefs. We'll talk more about symbolism later.

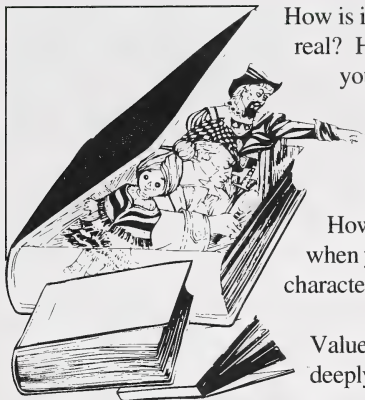
Symbol: an object, person, or event that has a meaning greater than its literal meaning

Theme: the central idea or insight about life that emerges from a piece of literature

On page 274 you read that the old man looked at the narrator "steadily, then averted his eyes and said, 'Send greetings to my son.'" At the beginning of the story it was Nick who asked the narrator to visit his father. Although the Solchuks are separated by their beliefs and their past behaviour, readers get the feeling that these two men respect one another. It's very interesting to note that there are tremendous similarities between the father and son. Nick, the geophysicist, lives in a small room and is devoted to his work – the scientific study of the earth. His father, living in a tiny farmhouse, is devoted to his work – making a living from the earth. It's ironic that after the events of Nick's childhood he would follow, in his own way, his father's footsteps. Both men love the land deeply. They love the mystery, the expanse, and the majesty of the land. But each in his own way.



Activity 2: Making Literary Characters Live



How is it that a reader can come to accept characters in literature as being real? How does a character come alive? The physical appearance tells you something. A character's words and actions tell more. Other characters in a story can shed light, too, by what they say about a character, and the narrator can tell you about a character directly.

However, in literature, as in life, you learn about characters more fully when you understand how they think and feel. You really get to believe characters when you can identify their values.

Values are beliefs that people hold very deeply. Religious beliefs are values to many people. The protection of children from harm is an almost universal value. Honesty, hard work, respect for the elderly – all these are values for many of us. Racial equality, democracy, freedom of speech – the list of values goes on and on.

In life we find that we really know others only when we understand their beliefs – their values. In literature the same principle holds, but as in life, you often have to infer or interpret the beliefs or values of characters you meet there. Like real people, literary characters seldom have signboards pointing to their values.



People usually feel outraged when one of their basic values has been violated.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Think about your values. What beliefs do you hold as being very important? Write out a list of your most important values and place it in your Writing Folder.

A reader gains understanding of a character in these ways:

- *by what the character says and does*
- *by what other characters say about the character*
- *by what the narrator says about the character*



In “The Broken Globe” you saw how the words and actions of the father and the son revealed their beliefs, their values. The next story you’ll read is also about a conflict of values. “Cornet at Night,” like “The Broken Globe,” is set on the prairies. It, too, is about farm people. The different values held by a farmer and his wife lead to an eventful episode in the life of their son. This young boy is the narrator of the story, but keep in mind that the author, Sinclair Ross, sees through adult eyes as he writes his story.



Now turn to page 239 of *Literary Experiences* and read “Cornet at Night” by Sinclair Ross. As you read, think about the different values of the father and mother.



¹ Shane Hill for the drawing he did while a student at Eastglen Composite High School in Edmonton. Reprinted by permission of Shane Hill, 1991.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Most readers experience a strong emotional response to “Cornet at Night.” In a paragraph or two describe your own initial response to the story – how it made you feel, what it seems to say to you, or how it can be related to your own life and experience.

At this point, after your first reading of the story, focus on the words and actions of the father and mother and try to interpret their values.

1. Consider the father first. After each quotation or detail from the story that’s provided here, write a brief explanation of what it reveals about the father’s values.
 - a. “. . . it was Sunday. ‘Can’t help it – I’ve got to cut,’ my father said . . .” (page 239)
 - b. “‘No, for a change he’s going to do what I say. The crop’s more important than a day at school.’” (page 240)
 - c. “‘A dollar for lessons and the wheat shelling! When I was his age I didn’t even get to school.’” (page 240)
 - d. “‘. . . pick somebody big and husky . . . Whoever it is, make sure he’s stoked before.’” (page 243)
 - e. “‘It’s your fault – you and your nonsense about music lessons. If you’d listen to me sometimes, and try to make a man of him.’” (page 252)
2. Now you’ll examine some excerpts from “Cornet at Night” that reveal some of the characteristics of the mother. Your task will be to interpret more quotations in order to understand the mother’s values.
 - a. “‘Not on the Lord’s Day,’ my mother protested.” (page 239)
 - b. “‘. . . you’re not interfering with him. He’s going to school tomorrow as usual.’” (page 240)
 - c. “‘. . . try to behave like a Christian and a gentleman . . .’” (page 241)
 - d. “‘. . . stay quiet and read – and afterwards, practise your music lesson.’” (page 241)
 - e. “‘If your Aunt Louise should come she’ll find that at least I bring my son up decently.’” (page 241)
 - f. “‘. . . I’m trying to make a different man of him. If you’d go to town yourself instead of keeping him out of school –’” (page 252)

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.



Well, so far it's pretty obvious. The mother's view of life is coloured strongly by her religious beliefs.

Yeah, but the father's very different. He only sees things that are practical – that he needs to make his farm successful.

But the mother isn't only concerned with religion. She's also really worried about what other people think of her. And she does seem to like music.

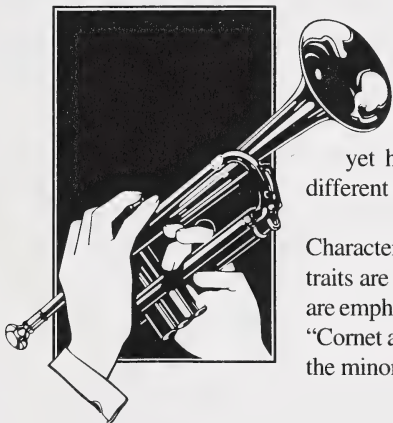
Those are all good points. And the son is an even more complex character. Although the mother's values seem to shape the boy's life, we see that he's also proud of his father and respectful of his beliefs. But essentially he longs for something that his father's world just can't give him.

3. For each of the following quotations write a sentence or two explaining how it reveals the boy's character. What do you learn about the son from each of the quotations?
- "... today a sudden welling-up of social and religious conscience made me ask myself whether one in the family like my father wasn't bad enough." (page 240)
 - "I was thinking that I might take a drink to my father, but dared not as yet suggest it." (page 241)
 - "When he was gone, she and I emerged to take our places at the table . . ." (page 241)
 - "I was inordinately proud that my father had suggested it, and for his faith in me forgave him even Isaiah and the plushy afternoon." (page 241)
 - "Whereas with my mother, I decided, it was a case of downright bigotry." (page 241)

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.

Now you have a basic understanding of the three major characters in the story, but don't ignore all the others. It's interesting to compare the two younger men that the son meets in town. When he's alone, going into town, the farm boy is quite self-confident. He's "the measure of the universe." However, when he encounters the "slick-haired young man in yellow shoes," the boy's "little bubble of self-importance" is burst. Even though the young man is not someone to be respected, the boy feels insecure.

In contrast, the young musician, the cornet player, whom Tom meets in the restaurant presents a different situation altogether.



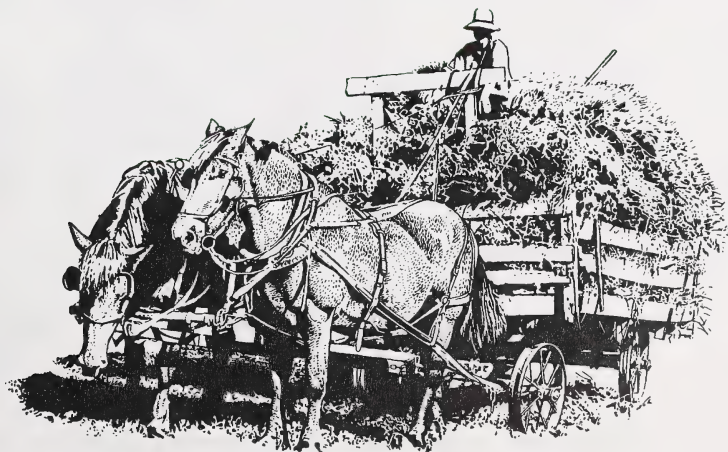
Foils: in literature, characters who contrast strongly with each other: also called character foils

He immediately attracts the attention of the boy because of his distinguishing – albeit shabby – clothing. The musician's hands draw the attention of the young boy too, primarily because "however slender and smooth, they were yet hands to be reckoned with, strong with a strength that was different from the rugged labour-strength" with which he was familiar.

Characters in a work of literature with strongly contrasting personality traits are called character foils – or just **foils**. The qualities of each foil are emphasized by the way they stand in contrast to those of the other. In "Cornet at Night" the mother and father are foils, but so are a number of the minor characters.

4. Select any two of the men Tom encounters in town who you think are character foils. Explain how they contrast and suggest why the author developed them with such contrasting traits.
5. "Cornet at Night" is a story about a boy who, sent to get a strong, experienced farmhand to help his father, returned with a slender musician who had never done farm work. Though it seems he made a serious blunder, he learns that "A harvest, however lean, is certain every year; but a cornet at night is golden only once." In your own words describe what it is the boy learned about life.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.



Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help

In Section 1 you've read and reflected on two short stories. Your primary concern has been with the characters. You've learned how characters in literature reveal their values through their words and actions in relationships with other people. You've seen, as well, how characters in literature are affected by pressures put on them by other people. An example of this would be the effect of the townsfolk on Tom in "Cornet at Night," not to mention the effect his parents had on him.

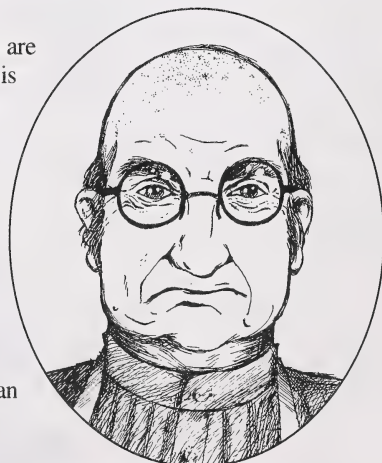
One thing you worked at in particular in this section is your ability to understand characters in literature by exploring their relationships and interpreting their values. You've seen how characters' words and actions help reveal their true natures. Often, though, it takes close readings to pick up on all the subtle clues writers give their readers as to the sorts of characters they've created. An active, perceptive reader must consider all of the following:

- things the narrator tells readers directly about characters
- what characters say and do
- what other characters say and think about them
- how other characters behave toward them
- to what degree the observations of the narrator and the reactions of other characters can be taken at face value

For more practice at looking for clues as to characters' personality traits, reread the section of "Cornet at Night" that appears as pages 244 to 247 of *Literary Experiences*. Pay close attention to three of the story's minor characters – the storekeeper, Mr. Jenkins; the young man with yellow shoes; and the muscular man who offers to work for Tom's father.



1. Minor characters are often "drawn" less thoroughly than are main characters because the focus of the reader's attention is meant to be on the latter. Such is the case with Mr. Jenkins. But although he's sketched in quickly as a character, readers get a very clear picture, both physically and psychologically, of the storekeeper. Describe two of Mr. Jenkins' notable characteristics, giving a quotation from the story to support each one.
2. Now do the same thing for the young man with the yellow shoes.
3. Finally, go through the same process for the muscular man looking for work for himself and his friend.



Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Extra Help.

Enrichment

Characterization, of course, works much the same way in films as it does in books. Active, intelligent viewers must be alert to many clues in order to “correctly” interpret a character’s personality.



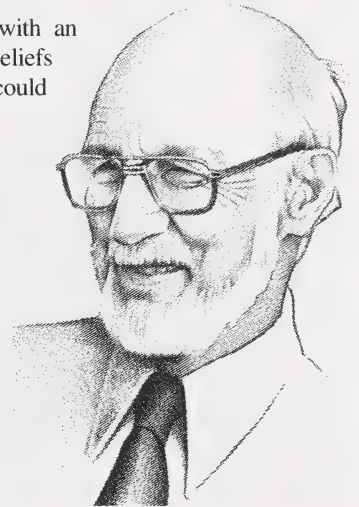
1. If you can get hold of it through your local media centre, watch the film version of “Cornet at Night,” (ACCESS Network video #VC262403). After you’ve watched the video, choose one character and, in a short composition, explain whether or not that character, as he or she appeared in the video, was consistent with your impression of the same character in the story. Provide details from the story and the video to support or to illustrate your opinions.



2. Tape-record (with permission, of course) a conversation with an elderly person in your community in which you discuss the beliefs that have guided this person’s life. Some topics to discuss could include the following:

- physical and/or mental well-being
- family relationships
- friends and enemies
- love
- money
- religion

Afterward, listen to the tape and see if you can infer what values your interviewee has held most important through life and how those values have helped shape the events of his or her life.



Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Enrichment.

Conclusion

In this section you’ve looked at two stories that are related thematically. In reading these stories you probably noted how deeply held parental values can conflict with the values of the children in a family – not an altogether unusual occurrence in life, you may agree. In working with these stories, you should have developed your skills in picking out clues as to characters’ personalities, and you may well have become generally more sensitive to the means authors use to develop characters in their writings.

These are abilities you’ll be working at developing even more as you continue through the rest of the course.

Section 1 Assignment: Characters, Experiences, and Values

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 3 Section 1 Assignment Page # Name and ID #

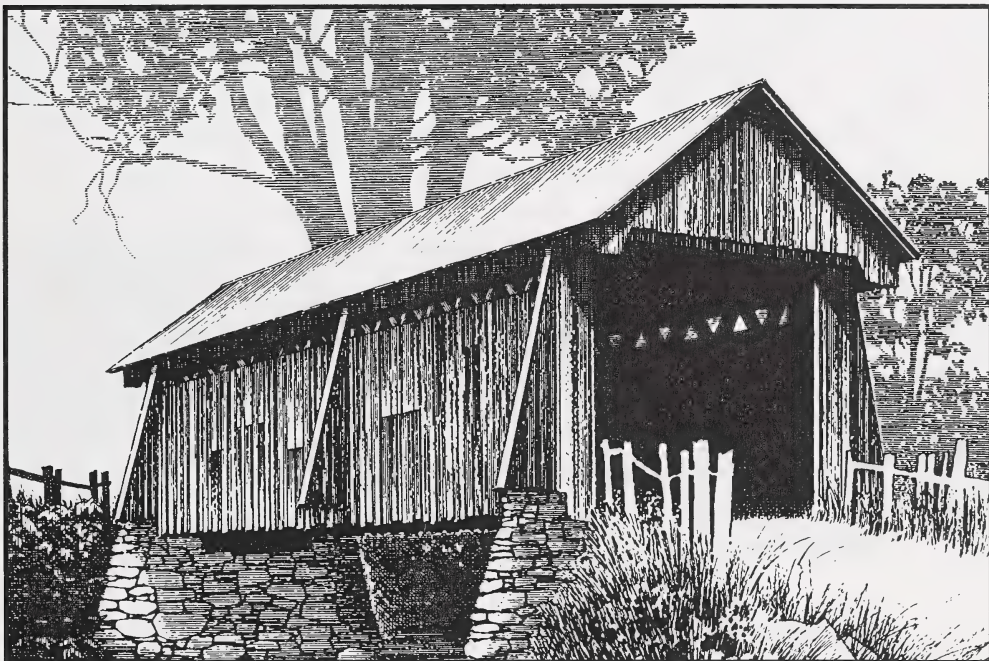
Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

1. Write a short sequel to the story “The Broken Globe” in which Nick returns home to meet his father after their long separation. Ensure that the characterization of Nick and his father that has been developed in the story continues in your sequel. Your response should be three or four pages in length.
2. A character sketch is a piece of writing in which the traits of a character from a work of literature are described. In writing a character sketch, you must tell not only what the character is like but also how his or her personality traits are revealed – for example, through actions, things said by or about the character, and so on. Everything you say about the character in a character sketch must be defended by specific references to the piece of literature in question.

Bearing this in mind, write a character sketch of **either** Nick Solchuk from “The Broken Globe” **or** Tom from “Cornet at Night.” Try to dig below the surface, make inferences where you can, note the character’s relationship with others, and present your findings in a well-written, properly defended character sketch of two to three pages.

SECTION

2

IMAGERY, MOOD,
AND SYMBOLS

Have you ever read a work of literature that created in you a strong emotional response but which you weren't sure you fully understood? Or, conversely, have you ever read a work of literature, analysed it, felt you understood it thoroughly, but found yourself totally unmoved by it?

As a reader, you'll get most out of the works of literature you encounter when you understand them with both your head and your heart. That's to say that when you can make an intellectual and an emotional connection with a piece of literature, your understanding deepens. Literature, remember, is a communication of both thoughts and feelings.

In this section you'll be looking at ways in which writers work to bring about both an emotional response and an intellectual awareness in their readers. In particular you'll examine three specific aspects of literature that help writers in this endeavour: mood, symbolism, and imagery. You'll apply your understanding of these aspects in doing your Section 2 Assignment.

But remember, writers can't do everything on their own. Only when readers are active and bring understanding and enthusiasm to what they read can writers succeed in creating exciting, meaningful, communicative experiences.

Activity 1: Imagery – Words as Sensations

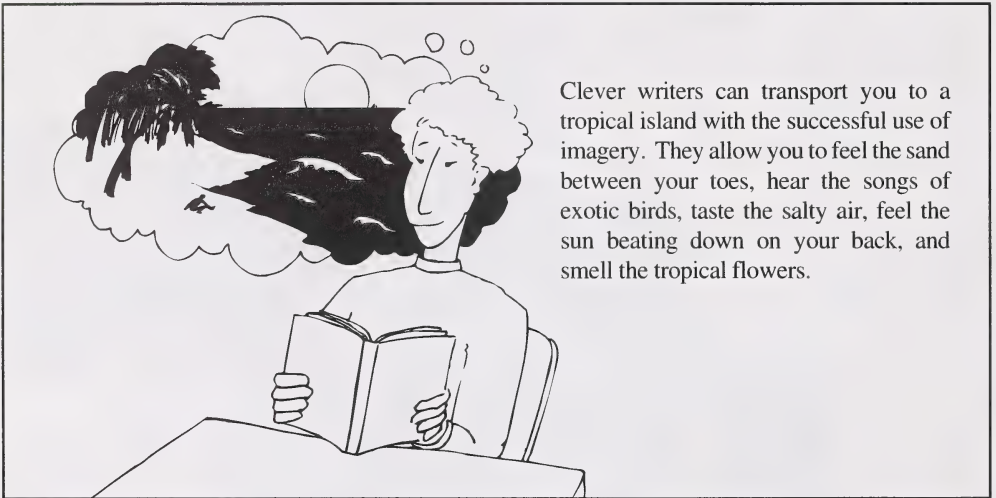


Etymology: the origin and development of words

Imagery: words used to “paint” pictures or create sensations for their audience

If you study the **etymology** of the word *image*, you’ll notice that it comes from the Latin *imago*, which means a likeness or an imitation. A photograph is an image. So too, is a painting. In literature, authors and poets use images too. Photographers take pictures to share their perceptions of the world with others. Writers do a similar thing, but instead of cameras and film, they use words.

Imagery is the effective use of words that create a copy or an imitation of an aspect of life and which generate a strong sensual response in the reader. You can actually see those glowing mountains in the failing light. You can taste the desert dust in your mouth. Your whole body vibrates to the beat of the big bass drum.



Turn to page 267 of *Literary Experiences* (you’ll be back into the story “The Broken Globe”) and read the description of the landscape in the second half of the last complete paragraph. Start with the line “But I also began to understand why Nick Solchuk was always longing . . .” and read up to “. . . leaving a superb evening light lying over the land still.”

Beautiful, isn’t it? Have you known evenings like this one? If not, can you imagine one?

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Try to describe in your own words how the passage you’ve just read from “The Broken Globe” makes you feel. In your mind’s eye what do you see?



Now continue on in your prairie journey as described in “The Broken Globe.” Turn to page 268 of the text and read the second paragraph that starts “The day broke clear and fine.”

The very effective visual imagery in this paragraph is due in part to its powerful figurative language. Similes work like magic to elicit your response to this passage, and the unusual adjectives and adverbs should stimulate your imagination too. The sky is “metallic” and the sun shines “coldly.” Strangely descriptive, wouldn’t you say? Readers encounter an “embryonic street,” a grain elevator “like a signpost,” and a street like an “island.” All these descriptive and comparative elements, although awkward when taken out of context, work together beautifully in the story; and you see, through the narrator’s eyes, a part of his prairie journey.



But imagery needn’t be full of unusual words and phrases. Clear, simple descriptive prose can also create effective imagery. Try entering old man Solchuk’s farmhouse with the narrator of “The Broken Globe” as you read the paragraph near the top of page 270 that starts “He beckoned me in with a nod of his head.” Read it again and allow the words to work on your imagination. The words are simple, but the effect profound.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to **one** of the following ideas.

1. Write a one-page composition describing the room that you’re working in right now. Use clear, descriptive prose, but also try your hand at creating some similes and metaphors that will help your readers imagine that they’re actually there. Imagery deals with the senses, so think about colour and light, texture, space, temperature, and odour. Bring the reader into the room with your writing.
2. Imagine that you’re a radio colour commentator for a royal visit to your town or community. It’s up to you to set the scene for your listeners – to help them see, hear, smell, and feel all that’s around you as you wait for the royalty to appear.

Activity 2: In the Mood



Mood: in literature, the pervading feeling or impression produced in the reader by a piece of writing

Mood

In the introduction to this section you encountered the word *mood* as it relates to literature. Put simply, the **mood** of a literary work is the pervading, primary feeling that the readers get from the selection. Of course larger works – novels for example – will produce more than one mood, but most literary works create one dominant feeling, along, perhaps, with a variety of secondary moods.

Imagery is one technique writers use to create mood in their works. In “Comet at Night,” for example, there are many places in which vivid imagery is used to create a variety of moods.

Turn to page 240 of *Literary Experiences* and find the paragraph that begins “He slammed out at that to harness his horses” Read the paragraph a couple of times and answer the following questions.



1. To what does the narrator compare himself and his mother?
2. Put yourself into the boy's shoes during the half-hour that this paragraph describes. What combination of feelings do you experience?
3. Think of the mood this paragraph creates. Now can you think of a piece of music that would reflect or reinforce this mood? If you can, and you happen to have access to the music, try taping yourself reading the paragraph with the music playing in the background. Play your recording for a friend and see if that person picks up on the mood you wish to develop.



Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.



Read the last paragraph on page 250. It begins "But there was only one note." What mood does this paragraph create?



I'm kind of amused. It's a funny sight to see the buggy bouncing down the road with all the stuff flying out. It reminds me of when I was eight and took a header over my bike handlebars.



I feel sort of scared for the boys. It sounds quite dangerous – just like the time a horse I was riding got spooked.



Very good! It's interesting to see that literature can create different moods in different readers.

Mood Versus Tone

It's important at this point to differentiate between mood and tone. Mood has to do with the reader's feelings, but tone, as you learned in Module 1, is the attitude of the writer, narrator, or speaker. This attitude is revealed in the choice of words that the narrator uses in telling the story.

4. Think about the farm boy who tells the story "Cornet at Night." Try to describe the tone of the narrator in this story, particularly in regard to his feelings about music.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

Activity 3: Making Sense of Symbols



Symbolism: the use of symbols in literature

You've seen how writers use colourful imagery and mood to help you make sense of their stories and poems. Next you'll see how they use **symbolism** to expand your understanding of literature.

In everyday language, a symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, a heart symbolizes love, while a skull symbolizes death, or danger, or poison. Mountains are symbolic of permanence and stability, and a snake is sometimes seen as a symbol of dishonesty or evil.

1. Suggest a possible symbolic meaning for each of the following:

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|---------------------|
| a. an eagle | d. a fist | f. a lightning bolt |
| b. a turtle | e. a handshake | g. a dove |
| c. quicksand | | |

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

Not all objects or events are viewed in the same symbolic manner by everybody. Certainly, there may be some universal symbols like fire or water, but there may be many different cultural interpretations of these things. Red may symbolize aggression to some of us, but in China red is the colour of good luck.

In literature you often find widely accepted symbols, but more often a writer will use a very specific symbol, unique to one piece of literature, to help you to understand the theme of a story or poem. In "The Broken Globe" you saw that the damaged globe was symbolic of the damaged relationship between father and son. Similarly, it could be argued that the drearily lit room that old Mr. Solchuk lived in represented – or symbolized – his unenlightened attitude toward scientific knowledge.



A word of caution is in order at this point. Not every object or event in a story has symbolic significance. If an object is referred to only once, it probably has no such significance. It's when something is referred to repeatedly that readers should start looking for a symbolic meaning.

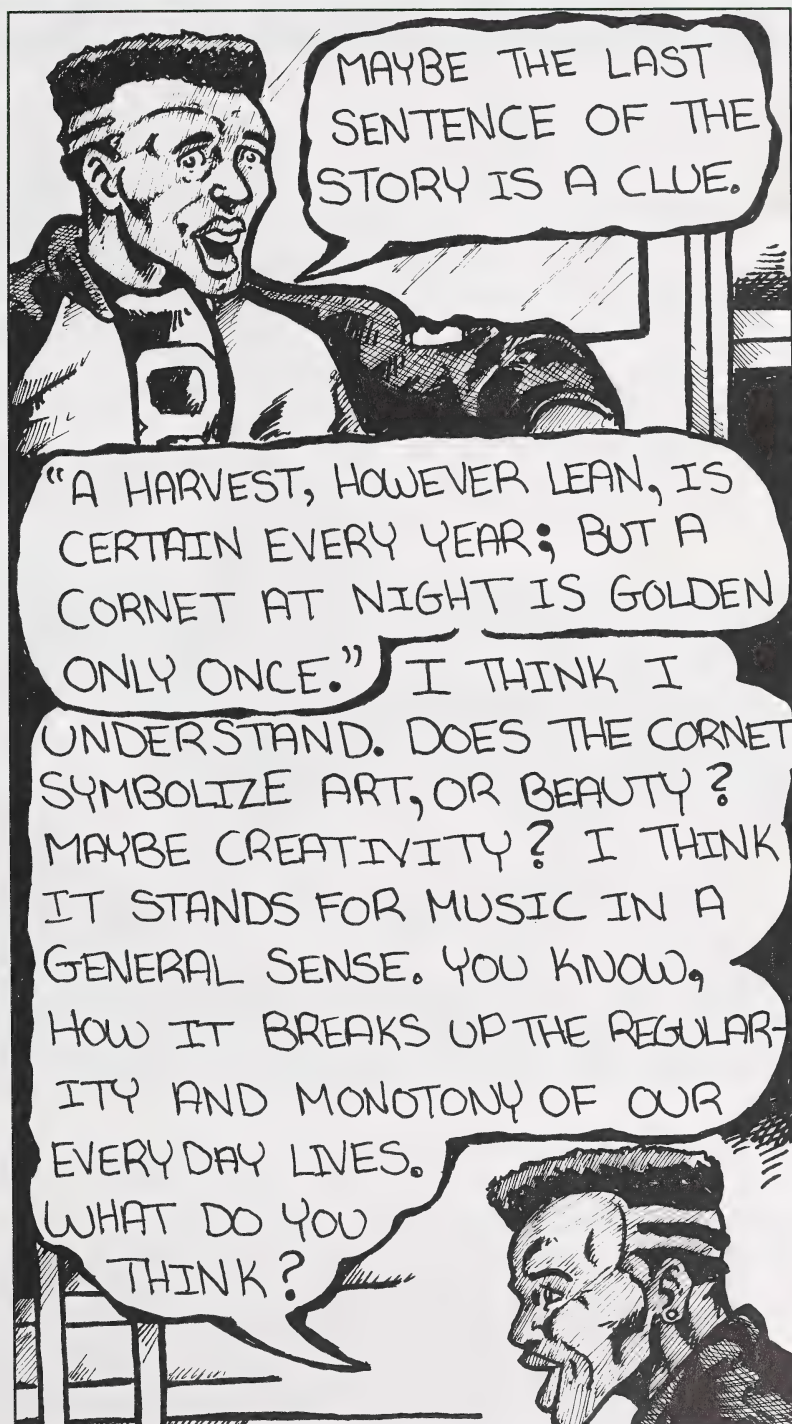
2. The yellow shoes are mentioned more than once in "Cornet at Night." Do you think that they have symbolic significance? Explain.

3. Tom can be seen in “Cornet at Night” as caught between two worlds – his father’s practical world of hard work and the world of music, beauty, and excitement that Tom longed for. Given this division, what symbolic significance might the two horses – Rock and Clipper – have in the story?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.



¹ Shane Hill for the drawings he did while a student at Eastglen Composite High School in Edmonton. Reprinted by permission of Shane Hill, 1991.



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Activity 4: Symbolism in “Day of the Butterfly”



Quick! Without looking, do you remember the title of this module? It’s “No One Is an Island.” The organizing idea behind the module is relationships. All the stories and poems in it deal with the problems and pleasures of human interaction; and the story you’ll be reading next – Alice Munro’s beautiful and very subtle “Day of the Butterfly” – is no different. In this story you’ll read about a childhood relationship; *friendship* is too strong a word to use because the story illustrates the very fragile connection that two girls make in their young lives.

Although the story has a sick child as one of the major characters, it’s not a superficial tear-jerker. There’s a very subtle, but nevertheless deep, sadness that pervades the mood of the story. Gladys, one of the school-children, calls Myra’s disease “Akemia, or something,” but readers know it’s really leukemia; and knowing this, readers find Helen’s hypocritical friendship truly “treacherous.” This short story is rich in symbols which will help you make sense of it with your head and your heart.



Now turn to page 311 of *Literary Experiences* and read “Day of the Butterfly” by Alice Munro. Be alert to symbols and imagery in the story, but don’t become so analytic that you end up stifling your response to what you read.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

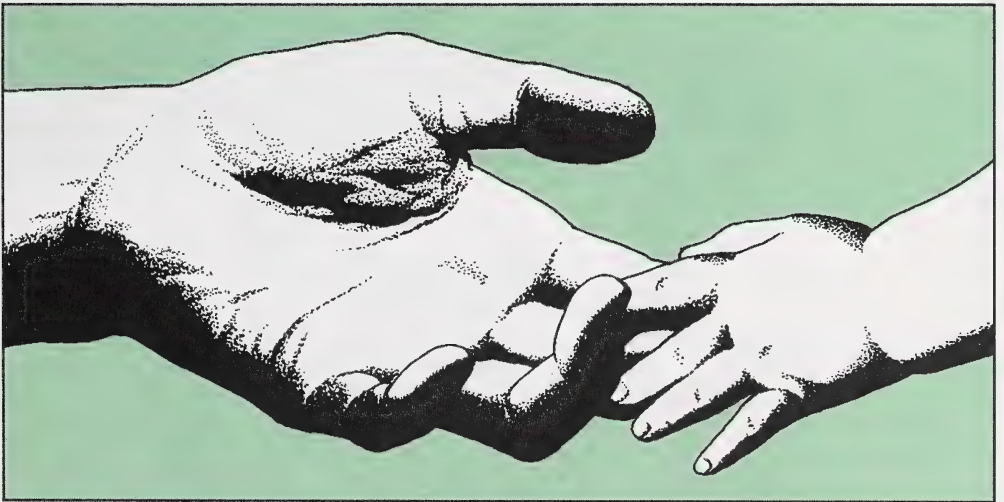
1. Try to explain in a paragraph or two what you think of Helen and the other children in Myra’s class. Do your feelings reflect the mood Alice Munro has tried to establish in her story?
2. Do you know anyone who’s suffered in the same sorts of ways that Myra suffers in the story. If you do, describe the situation, the person involved, and your feelings about it all.

1. In everyday life, what does the giving of a gift symbolize?

2. In the story, when Helen gives Myra the butterfly from the Cracker Jack box, she does it in a very offhand manner (“ ‘You keep it,’ I said. ‘Finders keepers.’ ”) To Helen, the butterfly means very little, but to Myra it’s an important gift. Write down a quotation from page 316 that shows Myra’s appreciation of the gift.
3. At the birthday party in the hospital Myra gives one of her presents to Helen – a makeup case that Helen noticed earlier. Do you think that Myra’s giving of the makeup case was a genuine act of friendship? Explain.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.

The gifts in this story are symbols. They show you that Helen’s friendship for Myra is cheaply held, but that Myra regards her friendship for Helen as much more significant. On both gift-giving occasions between Myra and Helen, their fingers touch. This apparently minor fact may mean a great deal, particularly if you see it as a literary symbol in this story. The touching of hands is certainly symbolic in everyday life, isn’t it?



The touching of hands is symbolic in everyday life.

4. Helen, the narrator, says this on page 316:

I realized the pledge as our fingers touched; I was panicky, but *all right*. I thought, I can come early and walk with her other mornings. I can go and talk to her at recess. Why not? *Why not?*

- a. What is the “pledge”?
- b. Why is Helen “panicky”?
5. On page 319, when Myra gives Helen the makeup case, their fingers touch again. This repetition of an event would lead you to believe that it is symbolically significant in the story. In contrast to Helen, how does Myra react to the touch of Helen’s fingers?

Probably the most powerful symbol in the story is the butterfly. Look at the title of the story again. Think about the present in the Cracker Jack box. Look at page 318, at the description of the birthday party. Butterfly, butterfly, butterfly.



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WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Think about the feelings, thoughts, images, and associations that come to you when you consider the word *butterfly*. Try to express these in a paragraph or two. Consider how these feelings, thoughts, images, and associations relate to the symbol of the butterfly in the story “Day of the Butterfly.”

Now that you’ve thought about what the word *butterfly* means to you, can you make connections between your associations with the word and the events in the story? Who, for example, might be considered a “butterfly” – Helen or Myra?

You can begin by looking at the birthday described on page 318. Surely the imagery of the girls in their fluttery bows and ribbons and their gaily coloured party dresses might lead you to believe that they relate to the butterfly symbol. Maybe they do in terms of their “flitty,” transitory concern for Myra; but look more closely. Are these girls the real butterflies?

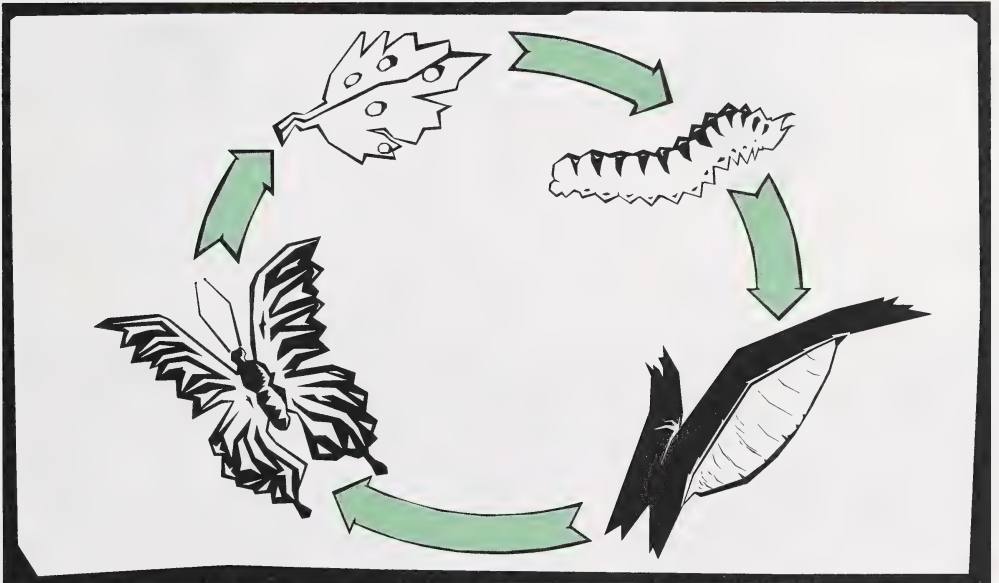
If you’ve ever investigated the life cycles of butterflies, you’ll know that they go through several metamorphoses – or dramatic physical changes – in their lives, from egg to caterpillar to pupa to adult.

Knowing this should help deepen your understanding of the symbolism in the story you're reading. Now answer the questions that follow.

6. What character in the story may have a short life?
7. Do you think that Myra undergoes any sort of metamorphosis? Does she change in any way?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.

Metamorphosis of a Butterfly



If you think that Myra does change, then you should see how the butterfly symbol in the story helps to expand the meaning of the story at both the intellectual and emotional levels. The theme of the story has to do with prejudice. Ironically, Myra, the girl who suffers the prejudice and hypocrisy of the other schoolgirls, is the one who ultimately does open up to reveal her true beauty. She shows true generosity in her gift and in inviting Helen into her home.

There's irony in the fact that many butterflies reveal their beauty only for a short time before they die. It's ironic, too, that when Myra reveals her inner beauty – her capacity for friendship – she might live for only a short time.

8. On page 320, the last page of the story, the narrator mentions treachery twice. What do you think is meant by "the treachery of [her] own heart"?

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.

Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help



Teacher: This section has dealt with imagery, mood, and symbolism. Do you remember what imagery means?

Manfred: I think so. It has to do with words that create feelings in your mind – sights, sounds, smells, feelings – even tastes, I guess.

Teacher: Good. And how about mood?

Anita: That's easy. Mood is the overall feeling that a piece of literature creates in a reader. It's the way it makes you feel.

Teacher: Right. And how about symbolism? It's a bit tougher concept I think.

Louis: Yeah, but I think I understand it now. A symbol's something referred to in a piece of literature – an object, person, or idea – that stands for something more than itself. Like a tree might stand for something strong and enduring or winter might symbolize "icy" relations between people.

Imagery, mood, and symbolism aren't concepts that apply only to written literature. These things also occur in such things as songs, for example. Here's something you can try.

Listen to your favourite music station on the radio for fifteen or twenty minutes. Listen very carefully to the words of the songs and, of course, the music. As you listen, do the following:

- Write down the titles of two songs that have some emotional impact on you, even if it's only slight.
- Below the titles, try to express in a word or two the overall moods of the songs – the dominant feelings they create in listeners.
- Next, list any imagery you noticed in the songs. Try closing your eyes as you listen; do you see, hear, feel, smell – or even taste – anything in your mind?
- Finally, jot down any symbols the songs use. Are there, for example, hearts, flowers, tears, or anything else that could be seen as symbolic?

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.

Enrichment

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.



You're going to write a poem and you'll enjoy doing it. Really! Here's how.

Think about someone you don't like. What member of the animal kingdom does this person resemble? A bear? A weasel? You decide.

Now write, developing this comparison. Use one line for each idea, and let your poem describe the person. Always keep the same animal; don't change from cow to horse to giraffe. Think about the person's appearance, personality, and behaviour; then allow your poem to flow, always comparing the person to the animal that you've chosen. Write twelve to fifteen lines, or until your comparisons are exhausted.

Next revise your poem. Reread it and cut out any words that aren't strong with meaning. Change weak words to stronger ones. What about punctuation? You don't have to punctuate or even capitalize if you don't want to.

Now rewrite the poem in revised form. Whatever you do, don't send it to the person you wrote about!

Conclusion

In this section you've learned how symbolism, mood, and imagery can help you make better sense of literature while increasing the emotional impact it has on you. Of all types of writing, poetry is richest in these three aspects of literature; in the next section you'll look more closely at poetry and at how poets can use such devices as symbolism and imagery to create rich, powerful, yet concise works.

30

Section 2 Assignment: Imagery, Mood, and Symbols

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 3 Section 2 Assignment Page # Name and ID #

Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

Literature often deals with “the pain of human contact,” as Alice Munro says in her book *The Moons of Jupiter*. Using the literature that you've studied in this section, write a short essay of roughly three or four pages showing how **one** writer develops the idea of “the pain of human contact.” In your response consider how the writer makes use of imagery and literary symbols to focus the reader's attention on this issue.

Here are some guidelines to help you prepare your essay:

- Review the literature that you've studied in this section and select one piece that will be the basis of your essay. Reread that selection carefully.
- Use prewriting strategies such as brainstorming to get ideas about what you want to say.
- Determine your thesis and how you intend to defend it. Prepare a thesis statement.
- Write an outline followed by a rough draft.
- Revise your work. Be sure that in your essay you expand and develop your main idea by supporting your opinions with examples and quotations from the story you've chosen. Your conclusion should tie up any loose ends and restate your thesis in an interesting way.
- Edit and proofread your work carefully. Use your dictionary and writer's handbook.
- Write your final copy and submit it alone for a grading.

Don't forget to give your essay a title.

SECTION

3

A LOOK AT
POETRY

When you think of poetry, do you conjure up visions of people who lived a long time ago expressing sentimental feelings in old-fashioned – and often barely comprehensible – English? If so, you're not alone, but your misconception about poetry is keeping you from a great deal of enjoyment. The fact is that poetry is written to give people pleasure, not to confound them. It should be enjoyable and important to you because poetry, more than any other kind of writing, can bring to life and crystalize many of your own experiences.

The chief objective of this section is to help you experience and appreciate some good poetry. You'll be looking at some of the techniques used by poets and, perhaps more importantly, you'll be asked to respond openly, actively, and creatively to the poems you'll be reading. You'll be able to apply what you've learned about poetry in your assignment at the end of the section.

Activity 1: Interactive Reading



As an introduction to this section, turn to page viii of *Literary Experiences* and read “To the Student” on pages viii and ix. Then do the Writing Folder exercise that follows.

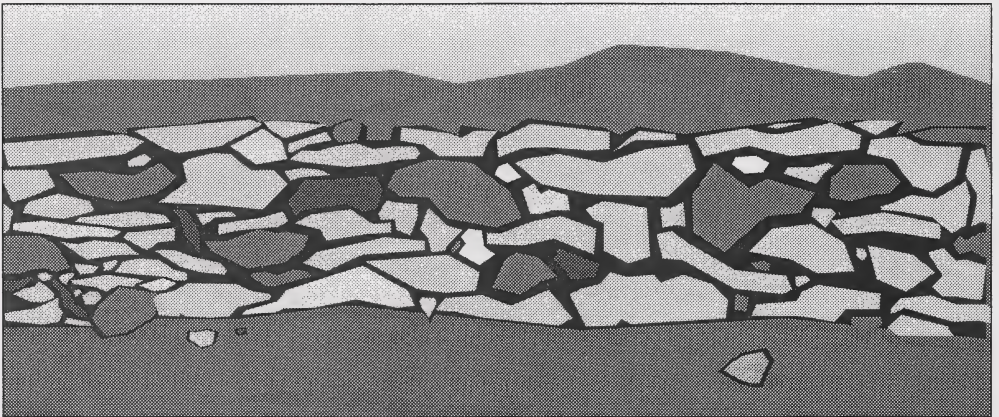


WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following:

Think about what Robert Currie, John Updike, and Alden Nowlan say in “To the Student” about the creative power of the reader. What is it these writers are saying? How do you feel about their message? What’s your response to the ways in which they express their ideas?

All right, you’re now convinced that reading poetry has to be an “interactive” process in which both poet and reader play a role. The next thing is to practise this sort of interactive reading. The first poem you’ll be practising on is “Mending Wall” by Robert Frost.



When you begin to read, do you consider the title of the piece of literature? The title is important because it often provides the first clue to the meaning. Consider the title of Robert Frost’s poem “Mending Wall.”

1. What comes to your mind when you think of a wall? Try generating a few ideas by brainstorming or concept mapping.
2. Without knowing anything more than the title, suggest what the poem might be about.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.

The title “Mending Wall” suggests the literal and symbolic meaning of the poem. The poem is set in the country, and the speaker, probably a farmer, is describing his experience of walking the stone wall every spring with his neighbour for the purpose of repairing the great holes that often develop in it. He also reveals some tension between his neighbour and himself concerning this fence.

One of the principal objectives of this section is to have you learn how to interact better with what you read. One of the best ways to do this is through writing interactive notes as you read. That’s what you’ll do in question 3.

3. Make a chart for yourself with these headings:

“Mending Wall” – Interactive Notes		
First Listening	Second Listening	Third Listening



Now listen to the recording of “Mending Wall” on your companion audiotope three times.

Each time, write down “good bits” from the poem in the columns of your chart. “Good bits” are words and phrases to which you respond – probably words or phrases that create mind pictures for you. For instance, from the first four lines of the poem you might jot down details such as “wall,” “frozen-ground-swell,” “spills the upper boulders in the sun,” and “sun.” Write these down so you can see them and think about their possible meanings. Listen for more details concerning the neighbouring farmer, the broken wall, the hunters and nature, and the disagreement.

4. Having completed your listening/note-taking exercise, do you feel it was helpful? If so, what benefit did you find there is in writing down details like this as you listen to a poem?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Describe the mental picture you have after reading “Mending Wall.” Include as many details of imagery in your description as you can. Consider details of setting, conflict, and character.

Now that you’ve tried your hand at making interactive notes in response to the poem, the following discussion will further focus your attention on the details of the poem.

As you read the discussion, refer to the poem – on pages 325 and 326 of *Literary Experiences*.





Well, what does "Mending Wall" say to you?

I'm not sure, but I think Frost is criticizing people like his neighbour who think that – let's see how he says it – oh, yeah "Good fences make good neighbours." It's like Frost is talking about all these forces of nature – and he seems to like nature – that work at tearing down walls. Then we see his neighbour, insisting that it's walls between people that make for good relations; and he just has to go out and put them back up.



Yeah. That's ironic, isn't it? Walls separate people, but this guy thinks they're the basis of neighbourliness!

Very good point. Note that though the poem is about very physical walls – made of boulders and rocks – these physical walls really symbolize something more. What is it?

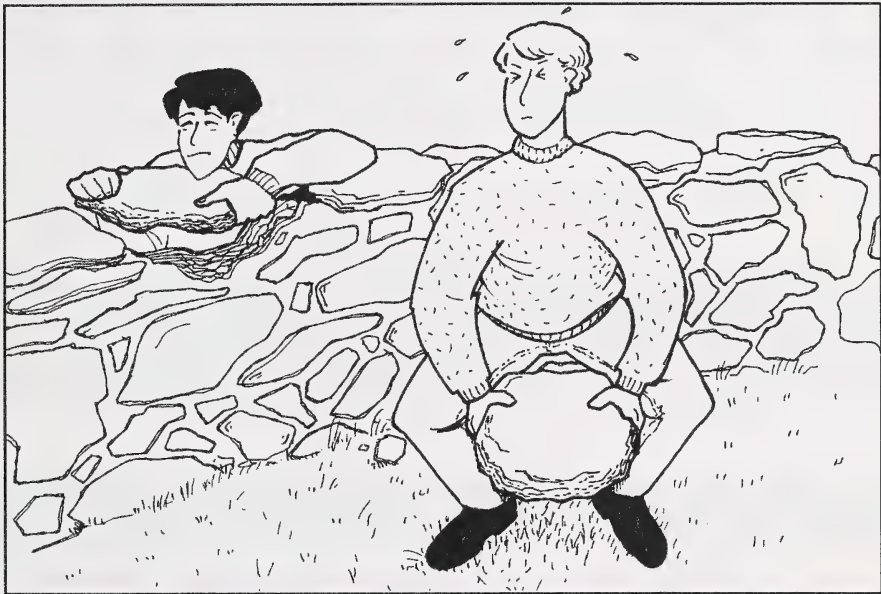


That's easy. It's the "walls" human beings put up between themselves. I think Frost is telling us we should tear town these walls – or at least stop deliberately building them up.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Why do you think people are so willing to “wall in” or “wall out” things and other people? Do you do this? Do you know people who do?



Activity 2: Experiencing Poetry



Three Poems

Listening to “Mending Wall” in the preceding activity – and taking notes to help you read “interactively” – should have given you an idea of how to approach poems so as to get at their meaning. In this activity you’ll be listening to and/or reading aloud three poems. Only this time you’ll be filling in charts with two columns – one for the “good bits” and another for your own notes on your feelings and responses when you encounter these “good bits.” Write whatever you wish to say in these second columns; remember, the charts are there only for your reference.

Your chart for each poem should have a heading like this:

Title of Poem – Author	
“Good Bits”	Feelings and Responses

The three poems you'll be listening to and/or reading are



- “Where Have You Gone?” by Mari Evans, on page 307 of *Literary Experiences*
- “Girl’s-Eye View of Relatives” by Phyllis McGinley, on page 237 of *Literary Experiences*
- “Between Here and Illinois” by Ralph Pomeroy, on page 279 of *Literary Experiences*



You have a choice. You can either listen to the poems on your companion audiotape or you can read them aloud – or both. Whichever approach you choose to take, read or listen to each poem two or three times, filling in your chart as you go. Do this now; then answer the questions that follow.

1. Which poem had the most powerful effect on you? Explain why.
2. Which poem had the least effect on you? Explain why.

Now select **one** of the three poems and respond to it in the following questions.

3. Do a web or concept map of the poem. Put its title in the centre circle, and in the surrounding circles write down whatever comes to mind – like details from the poem, personal experiences it reminds you of, feelings you get from it, and so on.
4. If you had to choose a coloured paper as a background for this poem, what colour would it be? Why?
5. Draw a small sketch of a visual image in the poem **or** describe the picture that’s strongest in your mind.
6. Which of your senses – touch, taste, sight, hearing, or smell – is most strongly affected by the poem?
7. What kind of music or song would you put with this poem to complement it?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

A Poem of Alienation

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.



Before you read the next poem, “Jamie” by Elizabeth Brewster, think about a time when you were very much alone, isolated from family and friends. (If you’re lucky enough never to have experienced this sort of isolation, think of someone you know or have read about who has.) Describe the feelings and actions that were associated with this experience.



Now turn to page 324 of *Literary Experiences* and read “Jamie” two or three times. Remember to make interactive notes as you read. Then answer the questions that follow.

8. What parts of Jamie’s experience bring about strong responses in you? Explain why.
9. What seems to be lacking in Jamie’s life that might have helped him deal with his disability.
10. What would you do if you were in Jamie’s position?
11. What are some words or phrases in the poem that you found particularly effective?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Imagine a scene late at night in which Jamie is drunk and yelling at the townspeople. Write what you think Jamie might say and keep it in your Writing Folder.

Activity 3: The Techniques of Poetry



So far in this course you’ve read a number of poems. From this reading experience you should have been able to make observations and draw conclusions as to the nature of poetry. Basing your ideas on these conclusions and observations, respond to the questions that follow.

1. In your own words, explain what you think poetry is.
2. What differences are there between poetry and prose?
3. What are some kinds of poetry you already know about?

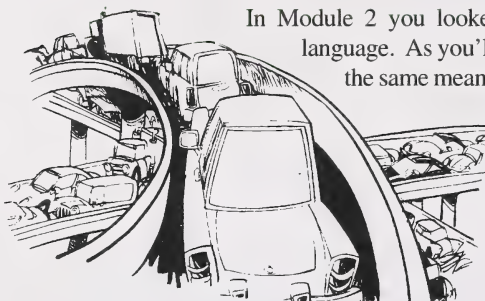
Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

Just what is poetry? In your responses to the preceding questions you may have noted some of the following characteristics of poetry:

- Poetry can be written on any topic.
- Poetry uses fewer words than prose does; it’s concise and compressed.
- In poetry words must be carefully chosen.
- Words in poems are used very imaginatively and intensely.
- Poems often have rhythm and rhyme.
- The sounds of the words are important in poetry.
- Even the placement of words on the page may be important in poetry.

Many of these characteristics are ones with which you're no doubt familiar. You're also familiar with many of the basic techniques used by poets. In this activity you'll further your knowledge of imagery, metaphor, mood, and symbol as they're used in poetry. You'll learn to identify the speaker of a poem more easily and become more aware of the sound of poems. Always, of course, the central purpose will be to increase your understanding and enjoyment of poetry.

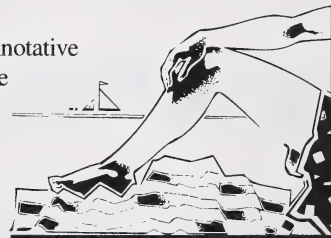
Literal and Figurative Language



In Module 2 you looked at the difference between literal and figurative language. As you'll recall, words – unlike numbers – don't always have the same meaning. They have literal meanings, but many words can also be used figuratively. A *bottleneck*, for example, is literally the neck of the bottle. But figuratively you can use the term to mean any situation in which movement slows down and progress is hindered – for example, a traffic jam caused by an obstruction in the road.

Our ordinary speech is full of figurative language. We can be “on our toes” even when we're sitting down and we can “lose our heads” without damaging our bodies.

Poets often reveal vividly the things they see through concrete, connotative words. In this case poets are saying exactly what they mean and are speaking literally. This is sometimes referred to as “single vision.” For instance, in “Between Here and Illinois” images of “instant coffee,” “raisin toast,” and “cold Tropicana” suggest matter-of-factness and absence of emotion. Contrasting images are “sunny” beaches and “swimming.” All these images are meant literally.



By contrast, poets often employ “double vision,” in which case they reveal more than just what something is; they also reveal what that something is like. They can do this by showing connections between things that are dissimilar. The language the poet uses to make these comparisons is, as you've seen, called *figurative*. You've looked at examples of this sort of figurative language in Module 2.

As a quick review of figurative language, answer the questions that follow:

4. Identify each of the following figures of speech as metaphor, simile, or personification.
 - a. Life is the fruit she longs to hand you,
Ripe on a plate.
 - b. Like your first shoes with heels on, like your first bicycle
 - c. He dived into their eyes and dragged up sneers,
 - d. And chopped the necks of pine trees in his anger.
 - e. And silence grew over him like moss on an old stump.

5. To be effective, a figure of speech must be appropriate, natural, and consistent. Is the figure of speech that's bolded in the following sentence an appropriate metaphor?

The priest devoted his life to the care of the sick and was regarded by the villagers **as a good egg**.

6. Looking back at the qualities of an effective figure of speech listed in question 5, tell which of these qualities the following example most obviously lacks. Explain.

Lazy men are barnacles on the wheel of progress.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

Symbolism and Mood

Because poetry depends so much on the power of a few words for its meaning and impact, symbolism is very important in helping poets achieve **compression**. You've looked at symbolism earlier in this module. If you're unsure about it, go back for a quick review before doing question 7.

Compression:
in writing, the
reduction of the
number of words,
usually resulting
in an
intensification of
meaning

7. Find a symbol in **one** of these poems:

- "Girl's-Eye View of Relatives" (page 237)
- "Between Here and Illinois" (page 279)
- "Where Have You Gone?" (page 307)

In your answer explain the symbol you've selected.

The mood arising out of a poem is often a very intense one because poetry speaks to the reader through the senses and through emotions.

Review the discussion of mood in the preceding section (Activity 2); then answer the following questions.

8. The predominant mood created by the poem "Jamie" can probably be described as one of sadness or loneliness. Give two or three examples of imagery in the poem that help create this mood.
9. What is the predominant mood created by the poem "Between Here and Illinois"? Explain your answer.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

The Speaker

As you'll recall from Module 1, the speaker in a poem, like the narrator in any work of literature, is the character who talks to the reader or audience. You should not assume that the speaker is the poet; often the poet, as you know, takes on a persona – a personality very different from his or her own.

When you read poetry, identify the speaker, the person or people being addressed or spoken to, and the circumstances under which the poem is being spoken. For instance in "Mending Wall" the speaker is a farmer who's talking to someone else about his difference of opinion with his neighbour concerning the mending of their fence.

10. Use the poem “Where Have You Gone?” (page 307) to answer the following questions.
- Who is the speaker?
 - Who is being addressed?
 - What is the circumstance?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

Putting It All Together

Next you'll be applying to one poem what you know about the techniques poets use to achieve compression, impact, and an emotional response from their readers. The poem you'll be looking at is “Adolescence” by P.K. Page.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

When you think of the topic of adolescence, what thoughts and feelings spring to mind? You can answer this question by brainstorming, webbing, listing, writing a short composition or poem – whatever way you feel best helps you express your feelings and ideas.



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Soon you'll be reading "Adolescence" by P.K. Page or listening to it on your companion audiotape. Remember to go through the poem several times making interactive notes; only this time in your notes include your ideas concerning the poetic techniques that are being used. In Activities 1 and 2 your responses were based mainly on personal experiences, but in this activity try to respond critically as well by considering the techniques employed by the poet.

Here's an example of a personal and critical response to a quotation from the poem.

"Good Bits"	Feelings and Analysis
A silken rain fell through the spring upon them.	I like the feeling of rain too. <i>Silken</i> is a metaphor, and that's how the rain feels. Spring is probably symbolic of newness.

Don't be discouraged if you have trouble understanding everything about the poem at first; each reading will bring about more comprehension. Remember to leave yourself open to the imagery and mood of the poem; to appreciate it fully, you must respond with your emotions as well as your intellect.



Now either listen to "Adolescence" or read it on page 306 of your text. Use the details from your interactive notes to answer the questions that follow.

- 11. Describe the mood of the poem. In your answer tell how it makes you feel and why.
- 12.
 - a. Who is the speaker in the poem?
 - b. Who or what is being spoken about?
- 13. Each stanza in the poem focuses on a different stage of the lovers' relationship. The first shows the newness, beauty, awkwardness, and vibrancy of first love, the second suggests the dreamlike quality and seductiveness of the love the two people share, the third begins to prepare readers for the lovers' parting, and the last deals with the aftermath of the relationship and its harsh effect on the lovers.

For each stanza give a few details that create or suggest these aspects of the relationship.

- 14. The last two lines in a poem are very important. In this poem the speaker says

and all who watched [the adolescents], forgetting, were amazed
to see them form and fade before their eyes.

What have the observers forgotten, and what are they seeing "form and fade before their eyes"?

- 15. Many of the details involve the "double vision" of the poet because they involve a comparison between unlike things. Find examples in the poem of the following:
 - a. **simile**
 - b. **metaphor**
 - c. **personification**

16. Poets, as you know, try to express as much as they can as concisely as possible. They achieve this compression in part through a careful choice of words and the use of symbols. Find two or three symbols in “Adolescence” and suggest what they represent.
17. The theme of a piece of literature is its central idea, message, or insight into life. In your own words try to express the theme of “Adolescence.”

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Does the description of teenage love in “Adolescence” ring true to your own experience and observations? Describe your reactions to the poem – what it says and how it makes you feel.

Your Own Response

All this analysis of poems is helpful, I guess, but it sort of ruins some of the pleasure I get out of reading poetry.

Yeah, but all that “techniques” stuff can sort of kill all the fun!

Yeah. It's sort of ironic, isn't it? It reminds me of biology class, where you dissect frogs and things. You're doing it to learn more about life, but you have to destroy the life to do it.

You raise an excellent point there. In fact, English teachers often find themselves caught in a dilemma when teaching poetry. On the one hand it's important to give students the tools they need to understand poems that often at first seem obscure. If students are taught poetic techniques, they're better prepared to untangle complex ideas and make sense of the poems they read.

Exactly. That's the other side of the dilemma. The pleasure and the immediate personal response a reader experiences in reading a new poem is often destroyed by too much analysis – too much searching for similes and symbols, too much labelling of moods and tones.

That's a good comparison. All I can say is that it's important to remember that what really counts is what a poem says to you – an active reader. Be alert to things like symbols and figurative language, but leave yourself open to the full emotional impact that these things have upon you as you encounter them. Remember, you have to respond with your emotions as well as with your intellect.





Turn to page 234 of *Literary Experiences* and read “To a Sad Daughter” by Michael Ondaatje. Then turn to page 321 and read “Only Child” by P.K. Page. Pick the one you enjoy most and do the Writing Folder exercise that follows.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

In a short composition describe what the poem you selected means to you. Feel free to discuss your emotional response, your understanding of the theme, connections the poem has to your own life or the lives of people you know – anything you want to write about. By all means discuss poetic techniques if you wish, but better yet, **use** what you’ve learned in this regard to help you get from the poem as much as you can.

Activity 4: Choral Reading



Activity 4 will give you the opportunity to show more of your creative skills in interpreting poetry.

Earlier you were asked to read poems aloud; that’s because the sound of the words matters a great deal. Now you’ll get the chance to refine your oral skills even further by learning about choral reading and planning the actual performance of a poem.

Choral reading:
an oral reading of
a poem in which
a number of
voices take part

A **choral reading** of a poem is an oral reading in which several voices take part. For that reason, in what follows it would be best to work with other students if you can. If this isn’t possible, however, you can still gain an understanding of choral reading on your own through planning how you’d do it.

Turn first to page 294 of *Literary Experiences* and read “To a Woman” by A.M. Stephen. Then turn to page 263 and read “The Average” by W.H. Auden. Choose **one** of these poems for a choral reading.

Now read your chosen poem aloud, looking up all unfamiliar words in the dictionary and getting an initial understanding of the poem. Consider the poem’s mood – how it makes you feel. Ask yourself some of the questions you were taught to ask in the preceding activities.

Next, duplicate or copy out the poem so you can make notes all over it. Then start thinking about the sound of the poem. Look for contrasts. Listen for changes in rhythm. Should some sections be read more slowly and others more quickly and in a livelier manner? Also, consider each word and how it should be emphasized.

Note all your ideas by highlighting, underlining, circling words, and/or placing notes in the margin of the page. You may decide to colour code the words so you’ll know how each should be read. For example, you could use yellow for the stressed parts, pink for the quiet parts, and so on.



He saw the shadow of an
Average Man
– “The Average”



In planning your dramatic reading you might consider the following:

- Higher voices can be used to suggest happier, lighter tones.
- Soft voices can enhance even rhythms.
- Deep voices can suggest harshness or briskness.
- A single voice reading a word or phrase when a number of voices have been reading the surrounding material makes the word or phrase stand out.
- Voices alternating, each saying one word, can suggest speed, segmentation, confusion; conversely, this approach can be used to achieve the effect of drawing out and slowing down action.
- Shifts in voice suggest shifts in thoughts or emotion.

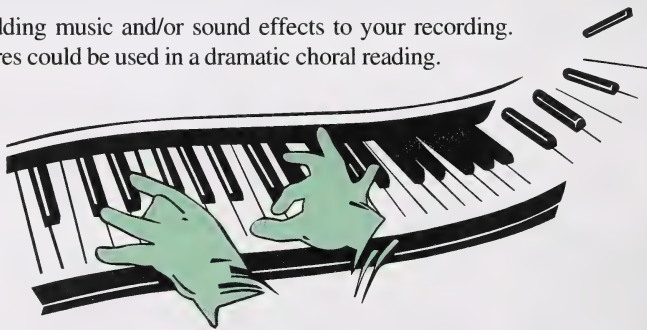


After making all necessary decisions of this sort, practise reading your poem, if you can, with your group. When you've mastered the poem, record your reading; play it for others and ask their response to your interpretation.

If you're working alone, read the poem aloud and practise reading the single voices in an appropriate way. If you wish, try recording yourself doing this; then imagine how multiple voices would sound.

If you can, you might consider adding music and/or sound effects to your recording. Consider what costumes and gestures could be used in a dramatic choral reading.

Now that you've played the role of director for a dramatic poetry reading, pretend you're speaking to the producer and answer these questions:



1. What do you see as the central focus or idea in the poem? In other words, what main thoughts do you want to leave with your audience?
2. How would you achieve this purpose through use of voice in each stanza?
3. How would you make use of sound effects?
4. What costumes and props might you use?
5. What movements and gestures would be effective?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 4.

Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help



If you had trouble with the activities in this section, remember that poetry is very compressed. That means that poets use few words to say very much. Therefore, it's important that you look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary and that you take the time to consider the many *connotations* words may have (for example, *slender* and *skinny* both mean *thin*, but the first word has positive connotations and the second negative ones).

Don't expect to "get it" on your first reading of a poem. In fact, good poems are never completely explained and offer more understanding each time you read them. Sometimes, too, you need to grow with a poem. As you change, the meaning of the poem will change.



Read again the poetry on pages viii and ix of *Literary Experiences* which explains the importance of the reader to the poem. Then do the following.

1. A very short poem (six lines) that captures a poignant truth about human experience is the poem "For Anne" by Leonard Cohen. Turn to page 308 of *Literary Experiences* and read, "For Anne" a number of times. Make interactive notes as you read.

Think about the "poignant truth" of the poem. Talk to someone you know well and ask that person if he or she has had an experience similar to the speaker's – an experience of not knowing the value of something until it's gone.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Read "For Anne" one more time. Write about what you've learned from the poem, from the experience of the person with whom you discussed it, and/or from a similar experience you've had yourself.

2. "Before Two Portraits of My Mother" by Émile Nelligan is a beautiful poem in which the speaker compares two pictures of his mother – one made when she was young, the other when she was old. Turn to page 238 of *Literary Experiences* and read the poem; then answer the questions that follow. Pretend you're teaching a short lesson on the poem to your classmates.

- a. Plan an interesting introduction to the poem. What might it be?
- b. Make up two or three good questions on the poem and work out the answers. Try to design the questions so that they'd help students respond intellectually and emotionally to the poem.



3. In “Love Poem” by John Frederick Nims, the speaker contrasts for his audience the awkward exterior and beautiful interior of the woman he loves.



Turn to page 310 of *Literary Experiences* and read “Love Poem.” Select three pairs of lines that you find most clearly show the contrast the poet is drawing and comment on how they work to convey his thoughts so clearly.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Extra Help.

Enrichment



Writing Poetry

1. Finally – what you’ve been waiting for! Here’s another chance to be a poet yourself – a chance to be a “painter with words,” a visionary, a songwriter – or perhaps a joker and juggler with language. Following are a number of suggestions for getting started. Read through this material carefully; then try some poetry writing for your Writing Folder.

In writing poetry, keep in mind that poems use condensed, compressed language. Every word is important. Often the language is figurative and contains vivid images, metaphors, similes, and so on. Also, poetry is rhythmic (though the rhythm isn’t necessarily strong and regular), and just as the organization of prose is in sentences and paragraphs, the organization of poetry is in lines and stanzas.

In explaining your feelings in poetry, begin with an image. Try to get a picture in your mind and re-create that picture so the reader can see what you feel.



You can get started in your poetry writing by trying prewriting strategies. Perhaps you could begin by webbing, as you’ve done before. Put the feeling or idea you want to express in the centre circle and then write down in the outer connecting circles all the images that come to mind. Don’t try to interpret or connect these images; just get them down on paper.



Take your rhythm from inside you and use your natural voice.

Your poem at first may look like prose. Change this by taking out the unnecessary words and arranging the words in lines and stanzas. Remember that the last line of the poem is very important, like a punchline.

When you finish your poem, read it aloud to see if it conveys the feeling you want.



Be prepared to revise your poem until you're happy with it.

If you're struggling with writing your own poem and would like more structure, or if you'd just like to experiment more with writing poems, the following are forms of poetry that you might want to try. You can research these forms in your library; your librarian or learning facilitator can help you. There's a bit more information on the ballad and the sonnet later in this Enrichment activity.

- cinquain
- concrete poetry
- tanka
- limerick
- free-verse poetry
- haiku
- ballad
- sonnet



If you have trouble writing poetry, why not "find" a poem? This can be fun.

One way to "find" a poem is to get hold of a work of prose or a short excerpt from such a work – a story, an essay, or even business writing that's quite descriptive. Organize this excerpt as a poem with lines and stanzas. Try taking out a few words here and changing a few words there, and there you have it, your "found" poem.

Another way to "find" a poem is to start with an idea or feeling for a poem and then go through magazines and newspapers looking for words that go with your idea or feeling. Don't look for specific words; rather, let the words jump out from the magazine or newspaper. When you've collected a number of words of varying sizes, types of print, and colours, begin to organize them into lines and stanzas on paper. Paste the words onto the page when you're happy with the arrangement.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

The Use of Sound in Poetry

Poetry uses two aspects of language that aren't usually connected with meaning: the sounds of words and rhythm.

In ordinary speech, or prose, the sounds of the words aren't of primary importance, but poetry uses sound to re-create human experience. That's why poetry is very closely related to music. In fact, lyrical poetry takes its name from the lyre because the early forms of poetry were usually spoken orally and often put to music.

Rhyme

Do you remember nursery rhymes and jingles from childhood and how impressed and entertained you were by just the sounds of the words? No double rhyme really impressed you.

Rhyme is the likeness of sounds at the ends of words or lines of verse; sometimes this likeness is exact and sometimes it's approximate. For example, *fingers* and *malingers*, *vote* and *rote*, *money* and *funny* rhyme exactly, whereas *hollow* and *yellow*, *love* and *move*, *hair* and *fear* are words that rhyme approximately.



2. What kind of rhyme are the following, exact or approximate?

- a. wild/child
- b. prayers/tears
- c. birth/forth
- d. gullets/bullets
- e. summer/newcomer

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

End rhyme is the most common form of rhyme. Here words rhyme at the end of lines as in the following example from "The Average."

His peasant parents killed themselves with toil
To let their darling leave a stingy soil

By contrast, internal rhyme is rhyme within a single line; it tends to speed up the poem's rhythm. An example follows from Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven."

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
week and weary,

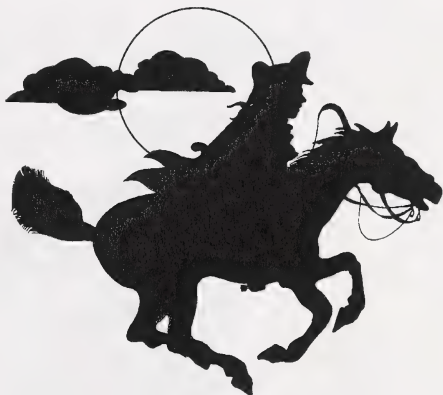
3. Think about all the poetry you've read in this module.
 - a. Which poems had rhyme?
 - b. Why do you think the poets used rhyme when they did?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

Other Musical Devices

Along with rhyme, there's a range of other "musical" devices that poets can use to increase the impact of their poetry. Here are a few of the most important one:

- **alliteration:** the repetition of consonants at the beginning of words. Examples would be "the mother of mouths" or "He clasps the crag with crooked hands."
- **onomatopoeia:** the imitation of natural sounds. Examples would be the words *hiss*, *clang*, *splash*, and *murmur*.
- **cacophony:** the use of harsh, unpleasant sounds. Examples would be words like *damned*, *bloodshot*, and *jagged*.
- **euphony:** the use of light, harmonious words. Examples would be words like *lilt*, *silvery*, and *bathe*.
- **repetition:** the repeating of words, phrases, and sounds. An example would be Leonard Cohen's use of the word *compare* three times in six lines in his poem "For Anne."



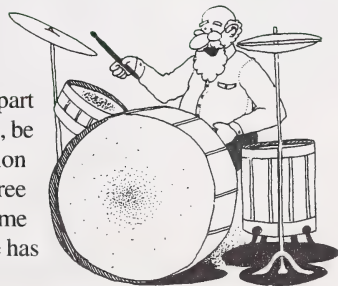
And the highwayman came **riding** –
Riding – riding –
 The highwayman came **riding**, up to the old inn door.

4. Turn to page 324 of *Literary Experiences* and reread the poem "Jamie." Look for examples of the following musical devices.
 - a. onomatopoeia
 - b. alliteration
 - c. cacophony

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

Rhythm

Rhythm is the characteristic of poetry that for centuries has set it apart from other kinds of writing. As you listen to highly rhythmic poetry, be ready to tap your fingers or clap your hands or be lulled into relaxation because of the beat. This doesn't hold true of all poetry, however. Free verse, for example, gains its effect partly because it doesn't have rhyme or a regular rhythm. Much of the poetry you've read in this module has been of this kind.



Metre is the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in lines of poetry.

To do this read the poem aloud and listen carefully for the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. The most common metre in English poetry is iambic; an iamb is a metrical foot composed of two syllables, the first unstressed and the second stressed – da-DAH, da-DAH, da-DAH, and so on.

Yes. This will allow you to identify the metre in the poem fully. For instance in Shakespeare's plays the rhythm is generally unrhymed iambic pentameter – or blank verse.

Right. Each line will have a metre more or less like this: da-DAH, da-DAH, da-DAH, da-DAH, da-DAH.

If a poem has regular rhythm, how do you figure its metre?

Next you count the number of feet in a line, right?

That means there are five iambic feet, more or less, per line, doesn't it?



5. Turn back to pages 262 and 263 of *Literary Experiences* and read aloud the poems “Warren Pryor” by Alden Nowlan and “The Average” by W.H. Auden. Listen for the poems’ regular rhythm. In both these poems the metre is iambic pentameter.

This regular rhythm creates a “shape” for the poems that reinforces the experiences they describe. For example, in both poems the regular rhythm contributes to the feeling of entrapment felt by the main characters because of their parents’ expectations.

Name another poem you’ve read in this module that has a regular rhythm.

Compare your response to the one in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

Kinds of Poetry

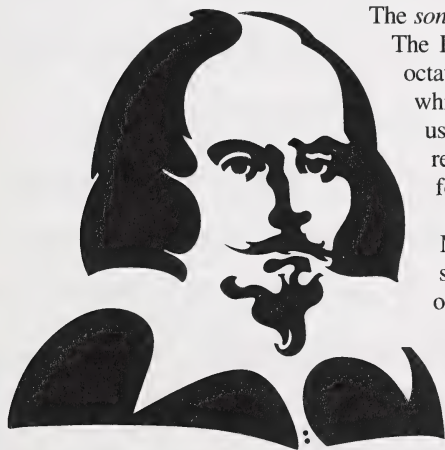
Although there really are no different kinds of poetry, there are names given to poems because of their shape or form or because of the kind of feeling they express.

Some poetry – and particularly modern poetry – has very little formal design. The lines follow each other without formal grouping, and the breaks in lines come about because of meaning. Free verse is like this. Blank verse, too, doesn't have a set form beyond the rhythm of iambic pentameter. However, some poetry does have a formal shape because of the stanza form that's used. You can determine the stanza form by identifying the dominant foot (often iambic), the number of feet to the line, the rhyme scheme, and the number of lines. Here are some often-used stanza forms:

- The *couplet* consists of two consecutive rhyming lines in the same metre. A couplet is one line “coupled” to the other.
- The *quatrain* is a stanza of four lines. This type of stanza is used in many forms of poetry, the ballad being one of these.
- The *sestet* is a stanza composed of six lines. The sestet is often the second part of the type of poem known as a *sonnet*.
- The *octave* is a stanza composed of eight lines. The octave is the name given to the first eight lines of some sonnets.

Two well-known poetry forms which use a particular stanza are the ballad and the sonnet.

The *ballad* is a narrative poem in short stanzas – usually quatrains. Traditional ballads were often written to be sung.



The *sonnet* is a fourteen-line poem with a fixed rhyme scheme. The Italian, or Petrarchan, sonnet consists of two parts: an octave stanza which usually represents a problem and a sestet which resolves it. The English, or Shakespearean, sonnet usually develops the problem in the first three quatrains and resolves it in the final couplet. (The companion audiotape for Module 6 will investigate these structures further.)

Modern sonnets seldom follow the traditional rhyme schemes for these stanzas but instead introduce variations of one kind or another.

Two examples of sonnets in *Literary Experiences* are “How Do I Love Thee” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning on page 309 and “The World Is Too Much With Us” by William Wordsworth on page 466.



6. If you find the sonnet an interesting form of poetry, find a modern sonnet (you'll find a few in *Literary Experiences*, or your librarian should be able to help you locate others), study it carefully, and prepare a short paper on it. Present the central idea; then explain how the poem is written. Discuss the speaker, any figurative language used, and the form – including rhythm and rhyme.

Compare your response to the one in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

Conclusion

What is poetry? Here are a few good answers.

Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat.

– Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Ut pictura poesis. (Poetry is like a painting.)

– Horace (65-8 B.C.)

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds.

– Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.

– William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Poetry should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

– John Keats (1795-1821)

Prose = words in their best order; poetry = the best words in their best order.

– Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

Poetry is a different and imaginative way of saying things. The aim of this section has been to stimulate your imagination by having you read a wide variety of poems, learn techniques used by poets, and experiment with your own writing. Poetry is about you and for you. It's there for you to enjoy – and to learn from.

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Section 3 Assignment: A Look at Poetry

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 3

Section 3 Assignment

Page #

Name and ID #

Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

Note: This assignment is to be done on an audiocassette.

Choose a poem from this module that particularly appealed to you. Imagine that you want to share the poem with someone (or some group). Address this person or group directly in a speech recorded on an audiocassette. Introduce the poem by explaining why you wish your audience to hear it. Perhaps you could create a situation involving conflict, controversy, misunderstanding, friendship or some such thing into which the topic of the poem would fit. For example, you might imagine that you're giving a speech to a parent group on the topic "Raising Children." Then read the applicable poem onto the tape,

remembering to use tone of voice, emphasis, speed and so on to create your desired effect and keeping the identity of your audience in mind. Afterward, still speaking to your chosen audience, describe your personal response to the poem (make mention of its mood) and also point out the poetic techniques the poet has used to create the effects he or she was after.

This assignment will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Thought and Detail

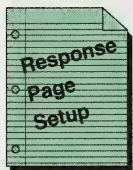
Organization

Creativity

Oral Delivery Skills (of the poem)

Remember to label your audiocassette fully and clearly. Include this information:

- your name
- your student number (if applicable)
- course name
- module number
- section number



MODULE SUMMARY



In Module 3 you've read a number of poems and short stories that dealt with human relationships. You've learned how the words and actions of literary characters reveal their values and how differing values often create conflict in relationships. You've also worked at improving your writing skills and were introduced to the process of interactive reading as a way of making sense of literature.

You saw as well how poets and authors use imagery, mood, and symbol to better develop the meaning or theme of their poems or stories.

In this module all the literature you read was concerned with human relationships. You read about relationships between family members, between friends, and even between strangers. Think back to the title of this module: *No One Is an Island*. Rather a strange title? It was adapted from a line from "Meditation 17" written by John Donne more than three hundred years ago:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

— John Donne

In this powerful piece of prose (which is often reprinted as a poem) Donne talks about humanity as he feels it should be. No one is alone, isolated. People are connected by the common thread of their very humanity; and Donne's theme, so beautifully expressed in his "island" metaphor, is the theme of every piece of literature that you read in this Module. Every author or poet whose work you encountered in this module sees the connecting thread of the human spirit in all the complexity of human relationships. No one is an island. We are part of one another, and literature can strengthen our awareness of the bond of humanity even if it focuses on rips and tears in the social fabric.

15

Final Module Assignment

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 3

Final Module Assignment

Page #

Name and ID #

Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

Find a piece of writing that you did for this module and saved in your Writing Folder. **Either** take the piece as is and, after revising and editing it, write a finished copy here **or** use the piece as the basis for an entirely new composition. Either way indicate clearly which Writing Folder exercise it was done for and hand in only the finished copy. Because you'll be expected to have revised, edited, and proofread the composition, it will be marked on such things as spelling, grammar, and punctuation as well as on creativity and content.

Your response should be two or three pages in length.

Above your response, copy and complete the following:

What follows was written in response to the Writing Folder exercise found on page __ of Section __.

To ensure that all your work has been completed in a satisfactory manner, check off the items in the following list:

- ☐ Section 1 Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Section 2 Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Section 3 Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Final Module Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Your responses are organized and neat, with room for teacher comments.
- ☐ All your response pages are numbered consecutively and identified with this heading:

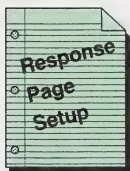
English 20 – Module 3

Section # Assignment


Page #

Name and ID #

Submit **only** your **assignment response pages** for evaluation.



Appendix

	Glossary
	Activities
	Extra Help
	Enrichment

Glossary

choral reading: an oral reading of a poem in which a number of voices take part

compression: in writing, the reduction of the number of words, usually resulting in an intensification of meaning

etymology: the origin and development of words

explicitly: stated directly

foils: in literature, characters who contrast strongly with each other: also called *character foils*

imagery: words used to “paint” pictures or create sensations for their audience

implicitly: implied rather than stated directly

mood: in literature, the pervading feeling or impression produced in the reader by a piece of writing

symbol: an object, person, or event that has a meaning greater than its literal meaning

symbolism: the use of symbols in literature

theme: the central idea or insight about life that emerges from a piece of literature

Suggested Answers

Section 1: Activity 1

1. Responses will vary. A relationship between two people may be complex because each person may have different needs, hopes, or fears. The people involved may have different backgrounds or different religious beliefs. Their personalities may differ enough to create complexity or even conflict in their relationship.

2. The story starts out in the city of London, England. Then it moves to a small village called Three Bear Hills in the province of Alberta.

The first setting suggests a worldliness and sophistication that contrasts sharply with the simplicity of the second one.

3. a. Responses will vary, but the passage seems to lead readers to expect a highly religious, traditional, stubborn, solid sort of individual rooted in the past and unwilling to accept change.
- b. Readers know that Nick is a scientist and scholar, so it's clear right away that father and son have diametrically opposed world views that are bound to clash.
- c. Nick seems to see his father's rootedness in the past as difficult to understand; it was only as an adult that he began to comprehend. This tells us that Nick is a very different sort of man – one who accepts change and is filled with scientific curiosity. However, Nick speaks gently of his father, thereby revealing his deep understanding and respect. You may have noted other things in your response.

Section 1: Activity 2

1. Responses will vary somewhat. What follows are possible answers.

- a. The father seems to be a practical man. Even though it's Sunday, a day of rest for Christians, he must cut his wheat.
- b. The father feels that his opinion is more important than his wife's because the demands of farming are more important than school. He values work and practicality more than education.

- c. The father believes that music lessons are a waste of money, especially when the wheat must be cut. He isn't concerned much with the arts, beauty, and aesthetic values.
 - d. Again we see that the father's concern is entirely practical; what matters is the man's ability – nothing else.
 - e. Here again it's clear that the father doesn't respect the arts. He considers an interest in music unmanly.
2. Again responses will vary. Here are some ideas:
 - a. The mother is very religious. She values the Christian teaching that states that no work should be done on the Sabbath Day.
 - b. She feels that her son's schooling is more important than the crop. She values formal education.
 - c. Appearances and good manners are important to the mother – as are her Christian beliefs.
 - d. Clearly the mother values intellectual and artistic development more than life's practicalities.
 - e. Once again we see that appearances, and what other people think, are important in the eyes of the mother.
 - f. The mother reveals a degree of resentment toward the limitations of her husband. She wants her son to be different from his father – more refined and less purely pragmatic.
3. Once again responses will vary. Compare yours to the ones that follow:
 - a. The boy feels guilty for wanting to ride on Sunday, and he almost believes that the critical things his mother says about the father are true.
 - b. The boy seems to want to associate with his father – to enter his world, to be part of the masculine lifestyle of the farmer. However, he's afraid to anger his mother.
 - c. The mother compels her son to wait until the father has eaten before they take their meal. She does this to show her displeasure toward her husband's actions. Again we see that she isn't one to forgive easily.
 - d. The son values his father's respect and approval. These lines also reveal that the mother's religious beliefs are an imposition on the boy. He doesn't enjoy the scripture reading.
 - e. The boy clearly sees that his mother's treatment of his father is resentful and unjustified.
4. Answers will vary. Here are some ideas.
 - The young man with the yellow shoes and Philip are foils in that the young man is pushy, superficial, and abusive while Philip is modest, sincere, and friendly.
 - Philip and the first man looking for work are foils in that Philip is quiet and has led a life devoted to his art whereas the other man is loud, coarse, and very physical.
 - Mr. Jenkins and Philip are foils in that Mr. Jenkins is contemptuous of Tom and short-tempered while Philip is respectful and kindly.
5. Wordings will vary, but basically he learned that there really is more to life than his father's practicality and his mother's emphasis on appearances and formalities. For the first time Tom is exposed to the world of true music, art, and beauty. Readers can assume that this other world – the world of people like Philip – will be the one Tom will live for now that he's been exposed to it.

Section 1: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

1. Responses will vary. Here are some ideas for Mr. Jenkins:

- He's impatient.

"Well, can't you set them down? My boy's delivering, and I can't take time ..."

- He's contemptuous of Tom.

"So you were there, were you? Smart youngster!"

- He's stubborn.

"Show me just one thing I don't know what it means."

2. Again responses will vary. Here are ideas:

- He's sarcastic.

"That's telling you, Jenkins – he was there."

- He's impatient.

"You're quite sure, Buddy, that you didn't have a runaway?"

3. Again responses will vary. Compare yours to the following:

- He's disrespectful and coarse.

"What's your old man pay this year?"

- He's contemptuous of Tom and his farm.

"Some farmer – just one man to stook."

Enrichment

1. Was the character you chose to compare consistent in the story and the video? Was he or she physically as you had imagined? What about the character's voice? Was it the way you "heard" it in the written story? Was the character older or younger than you had anticipated?

2. Was your interview successful? Was it fun? Were you able to make inferences about values and beliefs?

Be sure to thank your interviewee for cooperating with you. If you wish to discuss your inferences with your interviewee, be tactful and polite.

Section 2: Activity 1

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 2: Activity 2

1. The narrator compares his mother to a sailing ship and himself to a small boat in tow.
2. Probably you'd experience discomfort, suffering, and boredom, but you might have other feelings; it's an individual response.
3. What sort of music did you select? Sombre? Quiet? Funereal? Did you enjoy taping yourself against a musical background? Were the results satisfactory?
4. The tone of this story, at least in terms of music, could be considered as almost reverent. The boy loves music and has a deep affection and respect for it. Your response may differ somewhat.

Section 2: Activity 3

1. Responses will vary. People of differing cultural backgrounds especially will place different symbolic values on some of these things. Bearing this in mind, here are some ideas.
 - a. An eagle is often a symbol of majesty and power and sometimes farsightedness.
 - b. A turtle usually symbolizes slowness, ponderousness, and dogged persistence.
 - c. Quicksand can stand for entrapment in more than a physical sense.
 - d. A fist is usually a sign of aggression.
 - e. A handshake is symbolic of peace, greeting, and friendship.
 - f. A lightning bolt symbolizes suddenness.
 - g. The dove is often seen as a symbol of peace.
2. The yellow shoes could be symbolic of the young man's superficiality or phoniness. He seems to want to draw attention to himself with his artificially coloured shoes, particularly when he's contrasted with the cornet player, who really is deserving of attention, but acts in an unassuming manner.
3. Rock, the solid, slow, strong, dependable horse, may be a symbol of the father's world of hard work and practicality. By contrast, the fast, high-spirited, but temperamental Clipper may symbolize the world of Philip, the cornet-player – the world of art and beauty.

Section 2: Activity 4

1. Gift giving is symbolic of friendship, affection, or love. It may also convey appreciation or respect.
2. Responses will vary. Here are two possible quotations.
 - “ ‘It was your Cracker Jack,’ said Myra, scared and solemn.”
 - “She said, ‘I can wear it on my good dress.’ ”
3. Responses may vary somewhat. In contrast to Helen's gift of the butterfly brooch, Myra's gift of the makeup case seems to be symbolic of real friendship. How often do you give away presents on your birthday? Don't you think primarily of what you'll get?

4. a. The touching of fingers symbolizes friendship.
- b. Helen is afraid that if she shows friendship to Myra, she'll lose her acceptance by the other kids. Your response may differ somewhat.
5. Although your response may be different, you should be able to see that Myra wants to openly extend her generosity by inviting Helen to her house. She's not afraid of the friendship as Helen was.
6. Although any of the children could have a short life, it's probably Myra whose life will be the shortest. She has leukemia, an often fatal disease (and far more likely to be fatal in the era in which the story is set than today).
7. Responses will vary somewhat. On page 314, in the middle paragraph, Myra is seen to be "humble" and "hopeful." She's somewhat afraid to extend her friendship to Helen. This is in contrast to her later generous and open display of friendship toward Helen in the hospital. Surely this can be seen as an opening up, a change, a metamorphosis.
8. Helen, the narrator, decides at the end of the story that she won't extend her friendship to Myra. She's afraid that if she accepts the gift, her other friends will withdraw from her. The treachery has to do with the friendship she pretends to have for Myra. She's lying to the sick girl. Your answer may be somewhat different from this but it should be similar in intent.

Section 2: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

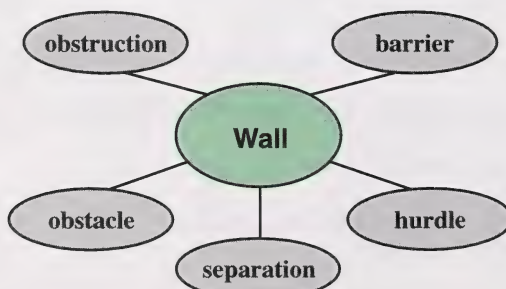
With luck there were a couple of songs that you could understand and respond to in an emotional manner. Perhaps they were sad songs, or songs that made you feel lonely. Maybe they were wild and crazy tunes that generated a sense of reckless freedom in you. Whatever your response, if the songs made you feel something, the literary term would be *mood*. If the songs helped you to visualize mountains, stormy nights, speeding cars, or busy sidewalks, or any other scene or event, you were responding to imagery. Now, if there were broken hearts, lonely teardrops, endless highways, or even peaceful evenings in your songs, they were ... that's right, symbols. Well done!

Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 3: Activity 1

1. Your response will be your own, but it might look something like this:



2. The title could suggest that the poem is about rebuilding or repairing a wall or some sort of divider. You might also be wondering if the poem might be about more than just mending walls.

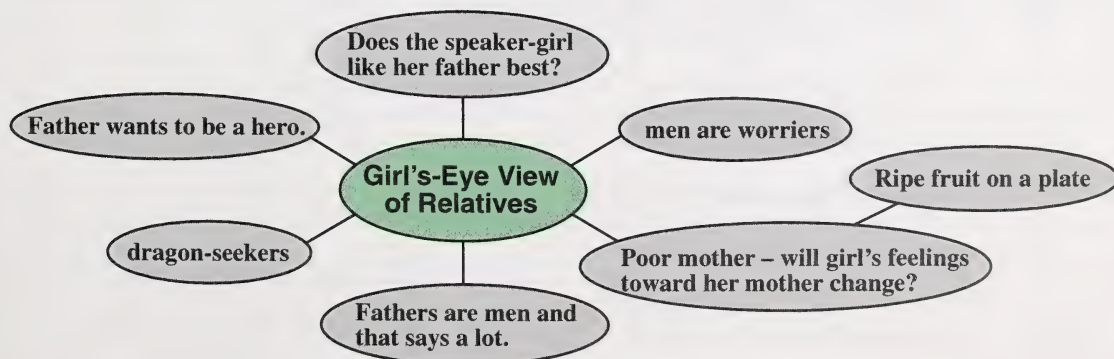
3. Here's one possible response to the poem. Yours will be somewhat different.

"Mending Wall" – Interactive Notes		
First Listening	Second Listening	Third Listening
wall - frozen-ground-swell - gaps - hunters - not one stone - rabbit - no one has seen them - neighbor - keep the wall - fingers - rough - pine - apple orchard - Good fences make good neighbors - no cows - walling in or walling out - something... wants it down	- walk the line - made repair - To each the boulders - loaves - eat the cones - Spring is the mischief - stone grasped firmly - Something there is that doesn't love a wall - moves in darkness	- gaps - set the wall between us - No one seen... or heard them - old-stone - savage - in each hand - shade of trees - Good fences make good neighbors.

4. At this time you may be hard pressed to say anything positive about this writing because it may have seemed like a good deal of work. Is this true? If you persevere and continue to make written notes in response to your reading, you'll find that it will increase your understanding considerably. Research shows that the act of writing – actually putting pen to paper – stimulates the right side of your brain, which is the image-making, intuitive, creative side. Your writing not only allows you to communicate but it also increases your thinking and ability to understand.

Section 3: Activity 2

- The three poems are all quite different. Hopefully at least one of them appealed to you. Were you able to explain why?
- The poem you liked the least was probably the one you identified with the least. Is this true? Were you able to explain why you didn't particularly like it?
- Here's a possibility for a web on one of the poems. Everyone's web will be different, of course.



4. In doing this question you probably considered the atmosphere in the poem and also the mood it created in you and then chose a colour that reflected this. “Girl’s-Eye View of Relatives” probably has the least definite atmosphere and mood, so you may have had the most trouble deciding on a colour for it.

5. Ideas will vary. Here are a few possibilities:

- In “Girl’s-Eye View of Relatives” your sketch may have been of “dragon-seekers,” a young girl in high heels, or a mother holding a plate of fruit. There are many other possibilities.
- In “Between Here and Illinois” you may have drawn a picture of a calendar, an airplane perhaps, or a funeral scene, or even “instant coffee.” Again there are many possibilities.
- In “Where Have You Gone?” you may have sketched a “confident” face with a “crooked smile” with sun, moon, or stars in the background.

6. In “Where Have You Gone?” the primary sense appealed to is sight. Examples are the phrase “crooked smile” and references to “sun,” “stars,” and so on. Hearing is also appealed to through reference to “laughter.”

In “Girl’s-Eye View of Relatives” the sense most affected is probably sight. This is done through “photograph-type” images such as “first bicycle,” “shoes with heels on,” and “swimming in deep water.”

“Between Here and Illinois” may have appealed to your sense of taste because of images like “cold Tropicana,” “raisin toast,” and “instant coffee.” Touch or feeling is also affected in phrases like “sunny at the beach,” and “too cold to go swimming.”

7. Answers will vary. Perhaps “Girl’s-Eye View of Relatives” would call for “adventure-type” music for the first part, but the second part would need an angrier and more brooding music. “Between Here and Illinois” would require quiet, understated music, though if you wished to provide a contrast to the subject, you might use very upbeat music that would change in the last two stanzas. In “Where Have You Gone?” you might choose sad, melancholy music – maybe country and western.

8. Responses will be personal. You may have responded emotionally to the suddenness of Jamie’s hearing loss and his feeling of disbelief. Also, you may have been affected by Jamie’s anger, suspicion, and loneliness in a silent world.

9. What’s lacking is support for Jamie from friends, relatives, and the community. He’s forced into “working at odd jobs,” and there’s no reference to anyone’s reaching out to him.

10. Responses will be personal. If you were in Jamie’s position, you too might react with anger and suspicion. If you too had no support, you’d probably also feel very lonely and without purpose.

11. Responses will vary. Here are some of the vivid words and phrases you might have noticed:

- “And silence grew over him like moss on an old stump.”
- “And chopped the necks of pine trees in his anger.”
- “He dived into their eyes and dragged up sneers,”
- “And dreaming at night of a shining cowboy heaven
Where guns crashed through his deafness,”

Section 3: Activity 3

1. Your response will depend on your experiences so far. After completing this section come back and see if you still agree with your answer.
2. Some of the differences you may have noticed between poetry and prose occur in the following areas:
 - length
 - word order
 - use of imagery and figurative language
 - punctuation
 - rhythm and rhyme
3. Your answers will vary depending on your experiences with poetry. Here are some well-known poetic forms:
 - sonnet
 - free-verse poetry
 - limerick
 - ballad
 - ode
 - haiku
4.
 - a. Metaphor
 - b. Simile
 - c. Metaphor (Jamie is compared to a deep-sea diver, the eyes of the watchers are being compared to the sea, and the sneers are compared to things brought up from the sea.)
 - d. Personification
 - e. Simile
5. The bolded metaphor is inappropriate because “a good egg” is far too casual a comparison given the subject and the tone of the first part of the sentence. “A guiding light” would be a more fitting metaphor.
6. The figurative language lacks consistency. Barnacles suggest the sea while wheels suggest land. This is a mixed metaphor and should be avoided.
7. Responses will vary. Some possible symbols in “Girl’s-Eye View of Relatives” are “dragon-seekers,” “strange woods,” “snakes,” “deep water,” and “journey.” In “Between Here and Illinois,” “Illinois” may be symbolic. As well things like the “sunny beach,” “raisin toast,” and “instant coffee” may symbolize everyday things. In “Where Have You Gone?” some possible symbols are “sun,” “stars,” and “heart.”
8. Some examples of imagery in “Jamie” that create the mood of sadness and loneliness are “stunned by the terrible silence,” “kicking a stick,” “rapping his knuckles on doors,” and “solitary and unloquacious as a stone.” There are many more.
9. Because of the understated feelings in “Between Here and Illinois,” the reader is made to feel the speaker’s shock that his father could die and be buried while his own life could carry on routinely. This intensifies the mood of sadness and respect.
10.
 - a. The speaker is probably a girl or woman (the poet is a woman).
 - b. She is expressing her thoughts to her absent lover or partner.
 - c. It seems she’s been abandoned by her lover.

11. Responses will be personal. It can be argued that the mood is principally empathetic (one of caring and understanding). Many of the images help readers understand how it feels to be young, passionate, and emotionally intense.
12. a. The speaker is an outside observer, probably an adult.
- b. The speaker is watching two adolescents fall in and out of love and seeing the changes that occur in them. He or she is probably addressing other adult observers.
13. Responses will vary.
- Some details from the first stanza that suggest an atmosphere of newness, innocence, beauty, awkwardness, and vibrancy are “green embrace,” “silken rain,” “swans,” “whittled nervously,” “white,” and “flowering trees.”
 - Some details that suggest a dreamlike quality and secretiveness to their love are “night,” “two-finger whistle,” “waterfall stairs,” “eddy,” and “dreams.”
 - Some details from stanza three that create the feeling of discord and confusion are “avenues in the dark,” “street lamps,” and “sopranos.”
 - Some details in the last stanza that suggest a feeling of bitterness and anger are “savage and swift as gulls,” “sharp as partly sculptured stone,” and “form and fade.”
14. The observers have forgotten what it’s like to be adolescents, and they’re amazed to see the love relationship blossom intensely and die just as quickly – and somewhat violently.
15. a. Some examples of similes are
- -“shy smile ... like an eddy”
 - -“street lamps sang like sopranos”
 - -“as in dreams”
 - -“savage and swift as gulls”
 - -“as sharp as partly sculptured stone.”
- b. Some possible examples of metaphors are
- -“and white was mixed with all their colours”
 - -“waterfall stairs”
 - -“silken rain”
- c. Some possible examples of personification are
- -“his two-finger whistle brought her down”
 - -“street lamps sang”
 - -“asking the hostile emptiness”
16. “Adolescence” is full of symbols. Here are a few:
- “silken rain”
 - “spring”
 - “white”
 - “dreams”
 - “avenues”
 - “emptiness”
 - “dark”

17. Responses will vary but here's a possible one:

"The poem's theme is that adolescence is a period of tremendous passion, strong feelings, and turbulent change. Young lovers can fall in and out of love with a speed and intensity that amazes older people."

Section 3: Activity 4

1. Responses will vary depending on the poem you've selected and your interpretation of it. If you're reading "To a Woman," you probably want to leave your audience pondering how men see women and, indeed, how we all tend to see fragmenting glimpses of other people rather than their whole selves. If you're reading "The Average," you may want to stress how parents can harm their children by foisting their own dreams on them and setting unreasonable expectations for them to live up to.
2. For the poem "To a Woman," there are many possible ways to do a choral reading. Here's one:

In Stanza 1 "Who are you?" should stand out – perhaps spoken by several people. Perhaps have one person, as narrator, read "To one," which is repeated five times. Different single higher voices might read the rest of Stanzas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, which could suggest that the roles were taken for granted. "Yet," in Stanza 6 should stand out by having the narrator or a single voice read it. Perhaps the rest of Stanza 6 could be read by a number of voices to suggest the harsh reality. Then have voices alternating, each saying one word for the listing of other roles held by the woman beginning with "Teacher" and ending with "Man." The words "these, too you were" and "the microcosm" should probably be read by the single-voice narrator. The last stanza could be read by all the voices up to the word "separateness," which might be read by one voice to make it stand out.

For "The Average" there are fewer possibilities for a choral reading. Here's a good one:

In the first stanza the first two lines could be read by deep voices. Because of the harsh realities described, the next two lines might be read by higher voices to depict the expectations. In the second stanza the first two lines would be effective read by deep voices to show fear. The following two lines might benefit from light voices to suggest high expectations. Single deep voices in the third stanza would suggest the terror of being alone. In the fourth stanza deep voices might be used to give the feeling of the horror of knowing the truth.

3. The issue of sound effects is wide open to your imagination. You could have the sounds of people toiling at the beginning of "The Average," for example, and a "roar" at the end. Any ideas for "To a Woman"?
4. This question is also open to your imagination. How about costumes for the different roles depicted in "To a Woman"?
5. There are many possibilities for movements and gestures in both poems, but particularly in "The Average," to characterize the parents and the "shy and country-loving child."

Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

1. Did you recognize in yourself the same behaviour of which the speaker in the poem is guilty? It seems part of human nature to understand the importance of things we have only when they're gone.
2. a. You might introduce the poem by asking your classmates (if you're studying in a classroom setting) if they think about their parents as young people and how they feel about their parents' growing old. You could ask students if they have looked at photographs of their parents in their youth. What changes do they see? Perhaps have your classmates find some pictures of famous people at various stages in their lives and study the evidence of their lives as revealed in the details of their faces.

- b. Responses will vary. The questions you might ask and the answers you could give might go something like this:

Question: Who is the speaker and why is the speaker saying this?

Answer: The speaker is a son or daughter looking at two portraits of his or her mother done at a young age and an old age. The speaker is moved by the changes he – or she – sees.

Question: Which details are important in each stanza and why?

Answer: The first stanza expresses the speaker's feelings of love for the youthful mother revealed in the one portrait. The mother's forehead is described as "white" and her gaze is compared to "Venetian glass" because it's so clear and bright. (Do any of your classmates know about Venetian glass?)

Stanza 1 leads into Stanza 2 with the phrase "of her gaze" and begins a description of the aged mother whose face is described as having "deep trenches" across the "marble" of her forehead. The speaker thinks of the mother's youth as a "rose poem." That's a metaphor, right?

Stanza 2 then leads into Stanza 3 and begins with an expression of sadness for the aged mother. It continues the comparison of the portraits and describes the youthful "joy-radiant brow" with the later "care-heavy" brow and the "sunrise" with "the thick coming on/of night."

The third stanza introduces the fourth with the phrase "of night." This stanza provides an unexpected response to the two portraits. It's the portrait of the aged mother with "faded lips" that brings "smiles" to the speaker's heart, but the portrait of the youthful mother makes "tears start."

Question: What do the last two lines mean?

Answer: The last lines of any poem are very important, and so it is with this poem. Perhaps these lines show that the speaker knows the old mother better and that is why his (or her) heart smiles. It may be that the tears are there because the speaker is thinking about all the disappointments, sacrifices, and pain the smiling young girl in the portrait is going to experience which will leave the "deep trenches" across her forehead.

3. Responses will vary. Here are some possible lines:

- "And have no cunning with any soft thing
Except all ill-at-ease fidgeting people:"
- "A wrench in clocks and the solar system. Only
With words and people and love you move at ease."
- "And keep us, all devotion, at your knees.
Forgetting your coffee spreading on our flannel,"

Enrichment

1. Did you enjoy your poetry-writing experience? Are you pleased with the results? What follows in the Enrichment should increase your understanding of the poet's craft.
2.
 - a. exact
 - b. approximate
 - c. approximate
 - d. approximate
 - e. exact

3. a. The only poem you've read that uses rhyme is "Girl's-Eye View of Relatives," and, if you did the Extra Help for this section, "Love Poem." As well, the last two lines of "Before Two Portraits of My Mother" form a rhyming couplet.
- b. Responses will vary. Perhaps Phyllis McGinley used rhyme in "Girl's-Eye View of Relatives" because it suggests the universal pattern in parent-child relationships. Also, perhaps the rhyme is reminiscent of nursery rhymes.

In "Love Poem" rhyme seems to complement the poem's light/serious mood. The rhyme used in the last lines of "Before Two Portraits of My Mother" increases the impact of these, the most important lines in the poem.

4. a. Possible examples of onomatopoeia are

- "rapping"
- "whining"

- b. Possible examples of alliteration are

- "spell of silence"
- "moved mouths"
- "sauntering the streets"
- "ploughing, picking potatoes"
- "lonely labour"

- c. Possible examples of cacophony are

- "Kicking a stick"
- "shuddered at the straining of their throats"
- "scorn"
- "dragged up sneers"
- "getting drunk"
- "guns crashed"

5. The only poem you've read with a regular rhythm is "Girl's-Eye View of Relatives." Again the rhythm suggests the universal pattern of growing up and separating from parents. It also enhances the half-playful, half-serious mood of the poem.
6. Did you enjoy examining a modern sonnet? Few poets today enjoy the tight form and strict rules of the sonnet, but those who work with this type of poem often feel that the discipline required to write sonnets helps them with their other poetry. Further, most poets who write sonnets today bend – and often break – the traditional rules; in other words, they experiment.

There are a number of modern sonnets in your text, some deviating from the traditional rules more than others. Two of these sonnets are "The Average" by W.H. Auden, on page 263 (this poem you'll recognize if you did the Extra Help for this section) and "My Father, Playing Father" by Deborah Eibel, on page 278. What follows is a brief discussion of these two sonnets.

"The Average" has four stanzas – two quatrains and two tercets (stanzas with three lines). It has a regular rhyme. The first two stanzas consist of rhyming couplets. The third stanza and the first two lines of stanza four have alternating rhyme, and the poem ends with a couplet. The first two stanzas act as an octave in a sonnet and reveal the problem, that of the parents' pressure on their son to become a "somebody" and their willingness to sacrifice so he can achieve this goal. The last two stanzas serve as the sestet and reveal the son's inability to live up to his parents' expectations. The rhyming couplet at the end proclaims the son's status not as a "somebody" but as an "Average Man."

"My Father, Playing Father" has fourteen lines with four stanzas. The first three stanzas have alternating rhyme, and the poem ends with a rhyming couplet. The first eight lines establish the situation of the distant, cold father who makes his child cry. The last two stanzas, the sestet, explain the mother's loyal, loving treatment of the father despite his selfishness.

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